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# VUE WEEKLY

EDMONTON'S 100% INDEPENDENT NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

#871 / AUG 28 - SEPT 3, 2008 | FREE  
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**WEEKLY**

**FRONT**

VIEWPOINT	4
ISSUES	6
OVER STRAIGHT	8
WELL, WELL, WELL	12
INFINITE LIVES	13
BOB THE ANGRY FLOWER	14

**DISH**

GREAT HEAD	18
I HARDLY KNOW 'ER	19

**ARTS**

HOPSCOTCH	22
-----------	----

**FILM**

FILM CAPSULES	28
DVDETECTIVE	30

**MUSIC**

ENTER SANDOR	33
BACKLASH BLUES	34
REVUE	34
NEW SOUNDS	46
OLD SOUNDS	47
QUICK SPINS	47

**BACK**

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY	48
QUEER MONTON	49
ALT.SEX.COLUMN	51

**WEEKLY LISTINGS**

ARTS	25
FILM	29
MUSIC	32
EVENTS	49

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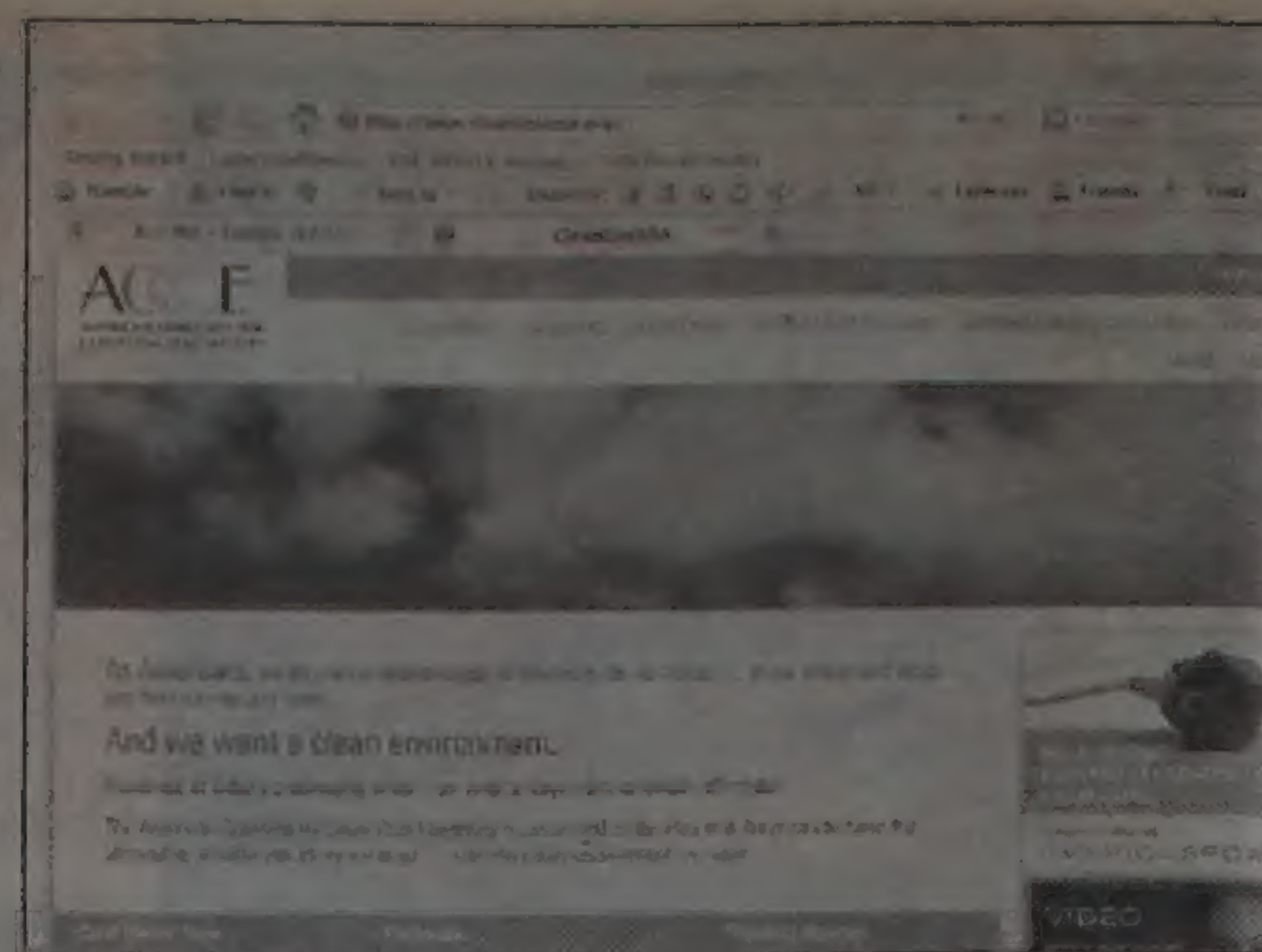
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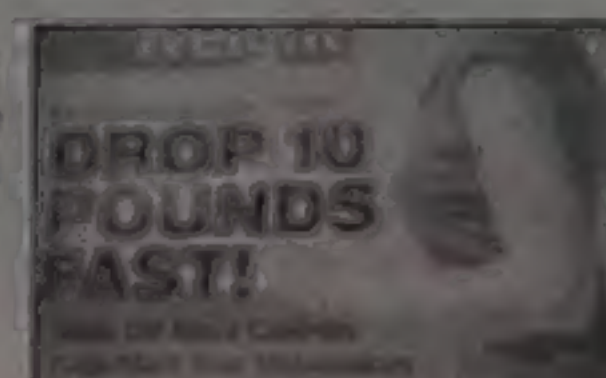
Vue breaks out the shovels and gets neck-deep in the shit.

FRONT



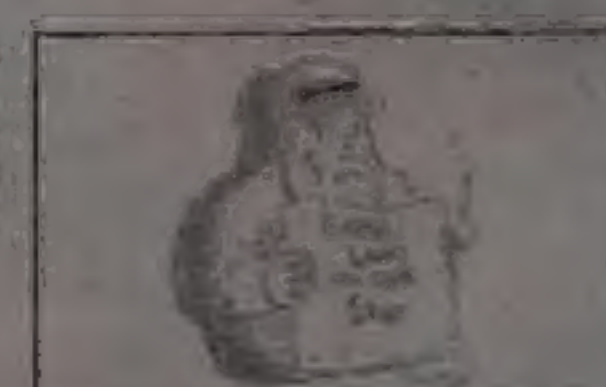
**SKEPTICS**  
9

DISH



**LOSE WEIGHT**  
16

ARTS



**MONORAIL!**  
20

FILM



**THE EDGE OF HEAVEN**  
27

MUSIC



**CITY STREETS**  
31

**Hair of the Dog**

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## Politics: down with brown

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com

The great thing about looking at politics with a mind to calling bullshit is that in any given week there is more of the brown stuff flying around than one can possibly shovel—a point driven home on Aug 26.

At the provincial level, Finance Minister Iris Evans announced yet another “surprise” surplus in her first-quarter update, making a \$7-billion upward adjustment to the predicted surplus, bringing it to a staggering \$8.5 billion for the fiscal year.

But despite the policy put in place by Premier Ed Stelmach to devote one-third of unbudgeted monies to savings, one-third to capital projects and one-third to the maintenance of existing infrastructure, Evans committed a paltry \$525 million to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund—leaving \$2.5 billion unallocated and ripe for the political picking—and dedicated almost nothing to maintenance.

The layers of bullshit run deep: first, there is the continuation of the insulting annual tradition of intentionally underestimating revenues. Then there is the quizzical ignoring of even the government’s own insufficient plan for savings at a time when practically everyone is saying we need to sock away far more of our windfall resource revenues for the future. And let’s not even get into the confirmation of a \$2 billion handout to industry for carbon capture and storage.

At the federal level, Prime Minister Stephen Harper all but confirmed that Canadians will be going to the polls in October when he announced he had asked Governor-General Michaëlle Jean to cancel next week’s scheduled trip to the Paralympic Games, presumably so she’ll be around to dissolve Parliament.

For weeks Harper has been talking tough to opposition leaders and piling the bullshit to the rafters to give himself an at-least-moderately plausible excuse to ignore his own fixed-election-date law. Despite his rhetoric of an increasingly “dysfunctional” minority Parliament and the need for a new mandate to implement his agenda, the reality is that Harper has simply come to the same conclusion as have past prime ministers: the ability to choose when to head to the polls is a great advantage, especially when heading a minority government with dwindling support numbers in a country with a looming recession.

The biggest load of bullshit: the forthcoming navel-gazing about why the country has such abysmally low voter turnout. ▼



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## MAIL LETTERS

### INQUISITION INSPIRATION

I enjoyed Bryan Birtles's inquisition ("How Fringe is Fringe?," Aug 14 - Aug 20, 2008) and feel inspired by it.

I am a modern dancer by trade and have been swept into this wild band of Fringe gypsies this summer, and we are here in Edmonton to perform in the festival. The work is a collaboration with acting, live music and dance, and I have had many revelations in this process.

As I have worked with this talented live musician, physically talented actors and collaborators, I was introduced to more humour than I would have ever chosen to put in my own work, but something magical happened. Perhaps balanced by our diversity as a group, humour became more thoughtful and poignant and actually a gateway to things that I think are difficult to digest—maybe not politically difficult and not mentally challenging, but more emotionally and intuitively. The humour in this show feels like it is not simply to get a good laugh, but more to develop character and to add dynamic to tragedy. A very rich kind of humor—not dark, and not simply standup either.

What is challenging about this is

that the hardcore storyline dramaturges feel like we are missing a linear story and the more abstract artists either think it is a bit too linear or they love where it guides you while leaving room for you to unfold for yourself.

I diverge ... it's so easy with this topic! In relation to the article, I wonder if often people are diving full force into a particular type of work—like comedy—because it is trendy at the time.

But my hope is that if people go deeply into whatever it is they are doing, then they will have that information for future work that will then have the capability of including many layers of style while still holding the integrity of each individual style at the same time.

I have been involved in art on such a different end of the spectrum with modern dance and now seeing the work at the Fringe festivals (the newbie that I am) I can see the kind of work that would both challenge and treat audiences. I hope to add that kind of work to this particular festival someday, but now I think that not only can that type of challenging work be done, it can also be layered with comedy and spectacle.

Much gratitude for giving me the inspiration to try to write about it all and get a little clearer on it all!

TAMARA OBER

*Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, whether critical or complimentary. Send your opinion by mail (Vue Weekly, 10303 - 108 Street, Edmonton AB T5J 1L7), by fax (780.426.2889) or by email (letters@vueweekly.com). Preference is given to feedback about articles in Vue Weekly. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.*

### CORRECTION

In an article on art show *Oil, Science and Soil* ("End of An Era," Aug 21 - Aug 27, 2008) Mary Christa O'Keefe stated the show was not "receiving funding," incorrectly implying that the show was unsupported. Artists Sherri Chaba and Lyndal Osborne wish to clarify their support from their host venue, Capital Arts Building Arts Branch, home to the Alberta Foundation of the Arts (AFA).

"In working with the staff of the Arts Branch we found tremendous support throughout the process. [The Arts Branch covered] technical and design assistance [and] insurance of the work and fully fund[ed] the publicity and promotion as well as the opening reception costs for 200 visitors. We appreciated their generosity and willingness to give us an early opportunity to bring our work to public attention in their new gallery." (Lyndal Osborne via email)

*Vue* regrets the error and apologizes for any confusion it may have caused.



# Exposing the bullshit industry

## Watch groups shine the light on the public relations spin

SCOTT HARRIS / [scott@vuweekly.com](mailto:scott@vuweekly.com)

**W**e live in an era of unprecedented bullshit production," writes Laura Penny to open her 2005 bestseller *Your Call is Important to Us: The Truth About Bullshit*. "Never in history have so many people uttered statements that they know to be untrue ... saying not what they actually believe, but what they want others to believe—not what is, but what works."

The sheer volume of falsehoods which barrage us all on a daily basis has spawned something of a protective adaptation, a savvy, knowing cynicism through which we view and filter the myriad messages aimed our way. We have become, in many ways, bullshit detectors.

As voters, we have developed a distrust for the rehearsed lines and the inevitably empty pledges of politicians. As consumers, we have learned that the promises offered by companies in their advertising—while they may still persuade us to buy—are at best half-truths.

But while we may be suspicious, we're not universally distrustful. Studies show that what we believe depends to a great extent on who we hear it from—doctors, scientists, academics and our fellow citizens can be trusted; lawyers, salesmen, politicians and corporations cannot.

If McDonald's says that we should all eat more hamburgers, we call bullshit without hesitation. But if the same message comes to us from, say, a non-profit group called Nutritionists for Food Options? Well ...

"One term that's sometimes used in the public relations trade to describe this is what they call the 'third-party technique,' which is to put your client's message in someone else's mouth," explains Sheldon Rampton, the research director with the Center for Media and Democracy, a US-based watchdog group focused on the activities of the multi-billion-dollar-a-year public relations industry.

"One way to do that is to get your client's message in the news so that it looks like a news story. Another commonly used technique is the third-party expert—someone who is presented to the public as an independent expert on some issue, such as tobacco and health or global warming or food safety or product safety, and either not disclosing or generally downplaying and not mentioning the fact that this person has actually been recruited and often paid by the industry itself to deliver its talking points."

While it's no secret that companies devote considerable time and resources to PR—a catch-all category of efforts ranging from innocuous media releases and staged photo-ops to the more insidious promotion of front groups and the creation and dissemination of one-sided research—Rampton says few people are familiar with just how much

these efforts have come to dominate the media we consume.

"In terms of how pervasive that is in society, well, studies have been done of newspapers and their contents that typically find that approximately half of the content of the daily newspaper originated with some PR firm in some fashion or another—through news releases or other forms. It's really a strikingly high percentage of the information that the public gets as news that's actually something that started from someone deciding that

mation to mobilize support for the war effort. And they invented a lot of the techniques that later got taken up by the PR industry," he explains. "A number of the people who went on to become founders of the public relations industry worked for the Committee for Public Information, and after the war ended they realized that there was a market and money to be made by providing similar services to companies."

The man often credited as being the "father of PR," Edward Bernays, opened his first office in 1919. One of his early

other tobacco companies delay the introduction of public smoking bans and other restrictions on smoking and cigarettes by helping form industry front-groups like the Advancement of Sound Science Coalition and fake grassroots citizens groups (termed Astroturf groups) such as the National Smokers Alliance.

While the tide eventually turned against the tobacco industry and restrictions on smoking are now widespread in North America, success in delaying the introduction of legislation by years through the covert use of third-parties has become a mainstay of the PR industry.

**SIMILAR TECHNIQUES** have been used to great effect for two decades by industries opposed to action on climate change through measures such as a reduction in the use of fossil fuels and implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

Kevin Grandia is the project manager of DeSmogBlog.com, a PR-watch organization formed in 2005 by Jim Hoggan—himself a PR professional for over 35 years who became frustrated with what he calls "one of the boldest and most extensive PR campaigns in history, primarily financed by the energy industry and executed by some of the best PR talent in the world"—to "clear the PR pollution that clouds the science of climate change."

He says the aim of the "climate denial" industry hasn't been to change people's behaviour so much as to promote a false debate, first questioning the scientific consensus about anthropomorphic climate change and more recently about solutions.

"In this case all they were trying to do—and they still do—is try to create seeds of doubt," he says. "The goal is not to persuade. Persuasion is much more difficult—to actually make people change the way they think or change the way they do things is much harder than just giving people a reason not to do something, like be concerned about an issue."

"And doubt is very easy to create by creating a debate in the media around the science of climate change," he continues, "which 10 years ago may have been somewhat legitimate, but now we're seeing not only the effect that the climate scientists were predicting, we're also seeing certainty levels higher than ever before and still the only 'scientific argument'—and I wouldn't even call it that, I'd call it an argument—is being played out against climate change in the media, not in the scientific literature."

In the late-2002 lead up to Canada's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, Burson-Marsteller's Canadian PR affiliate, National Public Relations, spearheaded the creation of the short-lived and unsuccessful industry front-group Canadian Coalition for Responsible Environmental Solutions to try to scuttle ratification by pressing for a

"made in Canada" solution.

Grandia says that groups in Canada like the Calgary-based Friends of Science and the Natural Resources Stewardship Council, along with similar groups in the US like the Cooler Heads Coalition, the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity and the Competitive Enterprise Institute, are continuing industry efforts to delay action on climate change, but have largely moved on from denying the problem exists.

"It's really started to move away from the denial of the climate science. That has changed now to 'Oh, well it's happening, but it's natural.' They don't actually have any science, but they have their own opinions of that. Outside of that kind of argument that's really fringe—just a few strange people who just can't let go or have been convinced by people who can't let go—the argument is really moving towards the solution-side of things and you're seeing industry and government coming in on that," he says.

"So you're seeing arguments around the carbon tax, of course. [Stephen Harper has] been saying it's going to kill the economy, but he has no proof of that. You're seeing arguments around why we shouldn't be doing renewable energy. You're seeing dirty energy sources, like the tar sands, being spun to be environmentally friendly."

Rampton says that efforts by industry and PR firms to promote and push concepts like "clean coal" are another important part of PR.

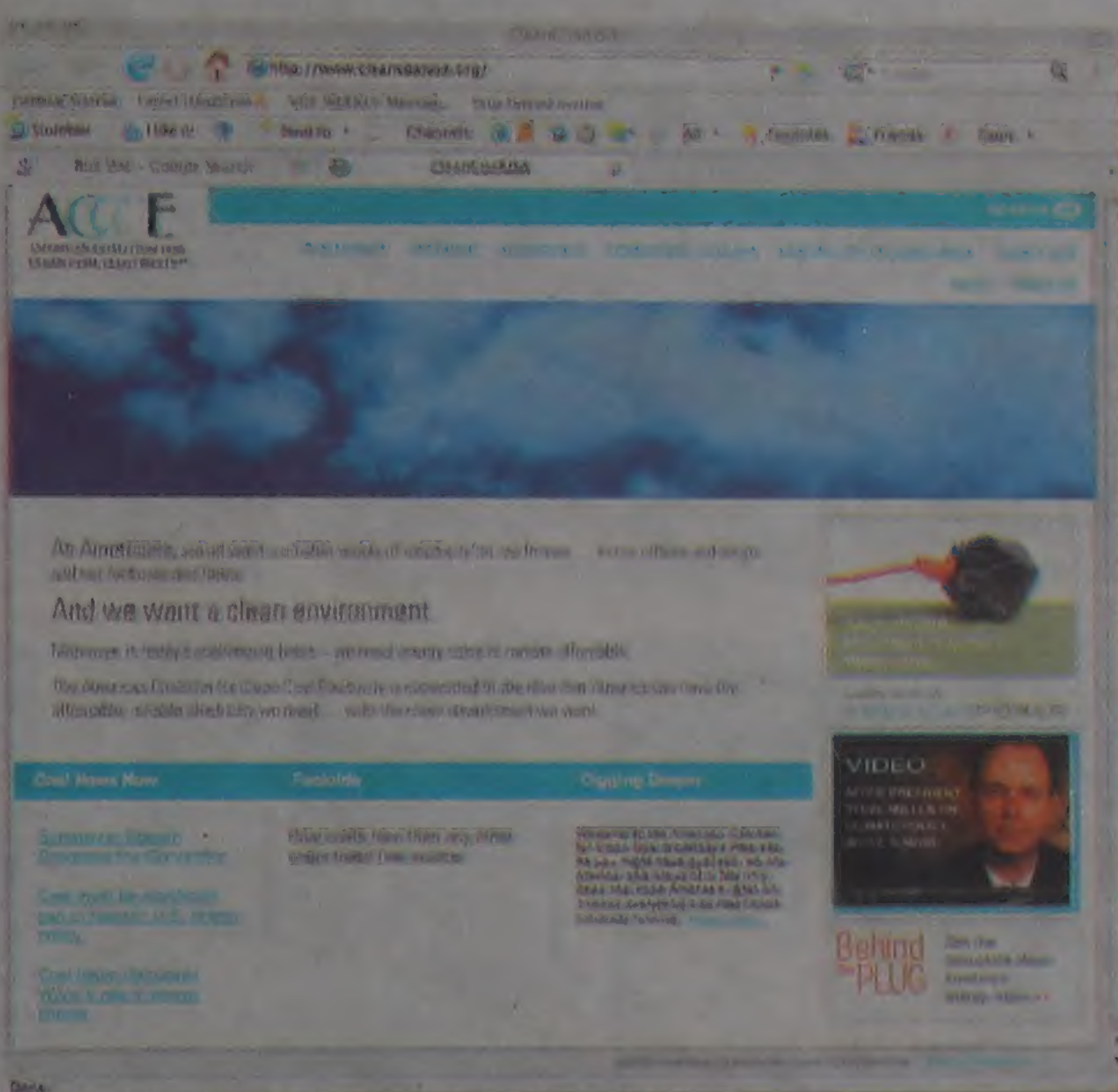
"Language is something that, of course, is very important in framing issues for people. And that's a term that a lot of PR people use in talking about how they use language: framing. Quite a bit of effort goes into figuring out the right terminology to talk about issues."

He points to similar examples such as the rebranding of sewage sludge as "biosolids" and the Bush Administration's "no child left behind" program.

"Who can be against the idea of not leaving a child behind? The very names of things become advertisements for them instead of descriptions as a result of these kinds of things," he says. "That's, of course, something George Orwell talked about quite a bit in his book 1984—that if you can control the vocabulary people use to talk about things then you can control the way they think about them as well."

**WHILE RAMPTON** believes many of the activities PR firms undertake on behalf of their clients—things like crisis management, publicity for product launches and providing information about their clients' activities to the public—are legitimate, he believes that more covert efforts deserve far more public scrutiny.

"Where I have a problem with it is



## 82 PUBLIC RELATIONS

they wanted to push that message out to the public."

**OVER THE PAST CENTURY**, the public relations industry has grown from a small number of individuals offering consulting services to clients to help them get their message out to become an industry that operates largely out of public view to shape everything from the cars we buy to the politicians we elect to the opinions we hold.

While public relations has roots in the colourful publicity stunts of traveling carnival hawkers and circus promoters, Rampton says the industry as we know it really began in the United States in 1917.

"During the First World War, Woodrow Wilson set up something called the Committee for Public Infor-

clients was American Tobacco, which was eager to increase demand for its cigarettes by reaching the largely untapped market of female smokers. Bernays staged an event which has become lore in the history of PR: sending a group of smoking models down Fifth Avenue challenging the patriarchy of the era with their "torches of freedom." By 1930, Lucky Strike, American Tobacco's main brand, had become the number one brand of cigarettes.

Over the next 40 years, Bernays worked for an estimated 400 clients, including General Motors, Proctor & Gamble and General Electric, pioneering and refining techniques such as product placement, direct marketing, product tie-ins and public opinion polling, while integrating elements of sociology and psychology into what he unapologetically called propaganda.

Bernays early involvement with American Tobacco also began a long relationship between the PR industry and big tobacco. In the 1980s and '90s, American PR giant Burson-Marsteller helped Philip Morris and



# Ending the CEMA sham

RICARDO ACUÑA / [calberta.ca/parkland](http://calberta.ca/parkland)

Before you can assess the effectiveness of an organization, you must have a very clear understanding of its purpose. That can be difficult in Alberta because the stated purpose behind agencies and organizations is so often the exact opposite of their actual political purpose.

In 2000, Alberta Environment led the creation of the Cumulative Environmental Management Association (CEMA). CEMA was set up as a non-profit, non-governmental organization to "study the cumulative environmental effects of industrial development in the region and produce guidelines and management frameworks."

The organization was composed of, and managed by, some 50 members representing "all levels of government, industry, regulatory bodies, environmental groups, Aboriginal groups, and the local health authority, which have an interest in protecting the environment in the Wood Buffalo region."

The idea was simple: there was a boom of investment coming to Alberta's tar sands, and it would be necessary to establish guidelines to protect the environment in the Wood Buffalo region from

the cumulative impacts of that much development happening that quickly.

Eight years later, the CEMA website boasts that the organization has produced hundreds of reports and seven management frameworks. The reality, however, is that not a single enforceable guideline or regulation has been implemented as a result of CEMA's work.

The cumulative effects of tar sands developments are still not being considered in the granting of new tar sands leases and approvals, and the government has yet to clearly articulate what the carrying capacity of the local environment is in terms of development. In other words, after eight years, hundreds of reports and seven management frameworks, we still don't know at what point the level of tar sands development will begin doing irreversible damage to the environment.

For all we know, we may have passed that critical point five years ago, yet government and regulatory bodies continue to issue new leases and approve new projects. How does this make sense?

It doesn't. For a government that is very concerned with the environmental

impacts of development in the north and genuinely wants to ensure environmental sustainability in the area, it makes no sense to continue issuing approvals without knowing the limits.

Unfortunately, we don't have that government. What we have is a government which is very concerned with getting as many tar sands projects approved and off the ground as quickly as possible while paying lip service to the environment and the well-being of First Nations communities in the area.

ONCE WE GET BEYOND the rhetoric and acknowledge that as the provincial government's real motivation, then it becomes clear that CEMA has been a tremendous success.

This conclusion is reinforced by a dynamic that has developed in the last couple of years at joint federal-provincial regulatory panels considering applications for new tar sands projects. These panels, which are required to look at the environmental impacts of the proposed projects, have simply begun referring to CEMA and then approving the projects.

In other words, despite the fact that

CEMA has accomplished virtually nothing, and no clear limits have been set, regulatory bodies are now saying that environmental impacts are being dealt with by CEMA so the project can be approved. In the recent hearings on Imperial's Kearl Oil Sands Project, for example, the panel went so far as to acknowledge that no limits had been set, and that CEMA had not done its work, but the project was approved anyway.

Apparently, the mere existence of CEMA is now enough for government and industry to jump through the requisite environmental hoops and get projects approved. And up until recently, the government could claim further legitimacy to this process by pointing out the participation of high-profile environmental groups and the affected First Nations in CEMA.

At the recent Keepers of the Water conference in Fort Chipewyan, however, some of that perceived legitimacy was finally taken away from this incredibly effective smokescreen. First, a group of First Nations leaders reminded delegates that they had already ended their participation in CEMA and announced they would now be challenging the government in court for

failure to consult on tar sands development. Then, three of CEMA's high-profile environmental groups (Pembina Institute, Toxics Watch and the Fort McMurray Environmental Association) announced that they would no longer be a party to legitimizing a flawed process, and that they were also leaving CEMA effective immediately.

At last, someone on the "inside" has stood up and called CEMA and the entire consultation process what they are—a sham. The ball is now in the government's court. Will they continue to pretend that CEMA—now made up almost entirely of industry and government—is actually making a difference, or will they take the steps necessary to reform the system and deal with the environmental impacts of the tar sands? Time will tell, but history suggests that Albertans should keep their eyes open for yet another high-profile, well-funded public relations smokescreen. ▽

*Ricardo Acuña is executive director of the Parkland Institute, a non-partisan public policy research institute housed at the University of Alberta.*

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# The missile defence scam

Nobody involved believes ABM bullshit, but playing the game benefits everyone

COMMENT

**DYER STRAIGHT**

Gwynne Dyer  
gwynne@vueweekly.com

Cynicism and hypocrisy are always part of international politics, but in the case of Poland and the anti-ballistic missile (ABM) missiles everybody is over-fulfilling their norm. Nobody involved in the controversy, Polish, Russian or American, believes a single word they are saying about this misbegotten missile defence system, whose principal characteristic is that it doesn't work—never has, and probably never will. And yet we're all expected to report what they say as if it mattered.

Washington insists that the ABM missiles are being put into Poland to protect the United States and its allies from Iran's long-range ballistic missiles (which do not exist) tipped with nuclear warheads (which Iran doesn't have either). Yet after months when US-Polish talks on the subject were stalled, suddenly on Aug 20 Warsaw agreed to provide a base for the "missile defence system"—because it would infuriate the Russians.

The Poles, who are anxious about Russia's intentions in the light of recent events in Georgia, want to send a signal of defiance to Moscow and get a permanent American military base of some kind on their soil. They're not worried about non-existent Iranian missiles—and if they do occasionally worry about very real Russian missiles, they are not so foolish as to believe that this American missile defence system would actually protect them. It doesn't work.

So why are the Russians so upset about all this? Why did General Anatoly Nogovitsyn, deputy chief of the Russian general staff, publicly warn Poland last week that hosting the American interceptors could make it the target for a nuclear strike? Don't the Russians know they don't work?

Of course they do, but the Russian military, like any professional military force, need a dramatic foreign threat to justify their demands on Russia's resources, and for that purely political purpose the American missiles work fine. Russian strategists claim that this system is actually intended to shoot down Russian ballistic missiles, and so undermine Russia's ability to deter an American attack by destroying its ability to strike back.

It's nonsense, of course. Even if the American ABM missiles did work as advertised, 10 launchers on Poland's Baltic coast are not going to make much difference given Russia's 848 long-range ballistic missiles, including hundreds that can be launched from submarines that are much closer to the US than the interceptors in Poland. The Russians are only pretending to be worried about the ABM missiles in Poland, although they are seriously annoyed by US military bases there.

The symbolic importance of the US opening a new military base so close to Russia in the midst of the

diplomatic confrontation over Georgia is clear to everybody, and Moscow is reacting to that. Even so, to threaten a nuclear strike against Poland sounds a bit extreme—except that in reality it doesn't mean a thing, and everybody knows that, too.

Poland is already a target for nuclear strikes in the most improbable event of a Russian-American nuclear war. Everybody in the American-led NATO alliance is. Yet they don't lose much sleep over it, because such a war is so very unlikely. General Nogovitsyn didn't announce a new policy; he just spoke more frankly than usual about a permanent reality, in the hope of intimidating the more naïve sections of the Polish population.

**IT WOULD MAKE** about as much sense militarily if this mini-crisis were about the basing of a crack American team of kung fu dancers in Poland. The new American missile defence base in Poland gives all the interested parties a way to make their political points, while having no serious strategic importance whatever. But why has the United States spent between

\$120 billion and \$150 billion on this ludicrous white elephant of a system since then-president Ronald Reagan first launched the "Star Wars" project in 1983?

Precisely because ever since 1983 the missile defence project has provided American senators, congressmen and presidents with the opportunity to pour enormous amounts of money into the pockets of defence industry, in return for much smaller but politically vital campaign contributions by those same companies. The technology can never be made cost-effective, but the project is impossible to kill because so many politicians benefit from it.

How can we know that the technology will never be cost-effective? Because even if the technology could finally be made to work to specifications, the whole notion of ballistic missile defence is ridiculous. It will always be 10 to 100 times cheaper to evade the ABM defences by adding decoys and other "penetration aids" to the incoming warheads, making them manoeuvrable, etc. than it is to upgrade the performance of the interceptors.

That performance, after a quarter-century's work, is so poor that only two out of the last five tests worked. And those tests are rigged in the ABM system's favour, with the defenders knowing the incoming missile's type, trajectory and destination. In more recent tests, they have used no decoys at all in an attempt to get the hit rate up. And yet they have deployed the system anyway, first in Alaska and now in Poland.

This is fantasy strategy in the service of the military-industrial complex, and no strategist in the know takes it seriously. But it does allow the owner to make quite impressive symbolic gestures, albeit rather expensive ones. ▽

*Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. His column appears each week in Vue Weekly.*

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# Making a living of bullshit detecting

## Meet the professional skeptics who call it when they smell it

OMAR MOUALLEM / omar@vuwweekly.com

In 1987, a distinctive man looking like a suited Charles Darwin—or Santa—sat in *The Tonight Show* chair next to Johnny Carson to premiere a video clip. Usually such a setup is reserved for an actor on press tour, but paranormal investigator and world-famous magician James Randi, “The Amazing Randi,” was a guest promoting only truth. That is, the truth about TV faith healer Peter Popoff.

The clip shown was of a typical Popoff stunt: God divinely tells him the name of an audience member, their ailment and their address, and Popoff palms their foreheads and they’re healed. But after the segment finished, Carson and Randi played it again with one small addition: an audio recording picked up in the church with a radio receiver by Randi’s informant. The evidence clearly showed that through Popoff’s unassuming earpiece, he was being read the information of sick people sitting before him.

“It turns out that ... God is a woman,” said Randi to Carson, “and sounds exactly like Popoff’s wife.”

“We exposed him very definitively. We showed exactly how he worked, what he was doing, how he was doing it, and how callous and cruel the whole operation was,” recalls Randi, 21 years after he exposed Popoff on *The Tonight Show*. “Well the evidence is in even further—and I’m glad Johnny didn’t live to see this—the latest reports are that Peter Popoff made \$10 million dollars last year—more than he did in the year we exposed him.”

Earlier this month, shortly after his 80th birthday, the Canadian expat announced that he was stepping down as president of the James Randi Educational Foundation, “an educational resource on the paranormal, pseudoscientific, and the supernatural,” and passing the crown onto Phil Plait, author of the book and blog *Bad Astronomy*.

In Randi’s 30-plus years of paranor-

## BS | SKEPTICS

mal investigations, debunking fraudulent claims has been an uphill battle brimming with countless lawsuits and struggles to get backing for his books amongst a paranormal-loving market. He has, though, also enjoyed numerous triumphs by exposing faith healers, mentalists, psychic surgeons and other contemporary snake oil salespeople.

There are few people like Randi, who choose to make a career out of challenging charlatans, but to show just how serious he was about it, Randi famously started walking around with a \$10 000 cheque in his pocket, ready for the first person able to prove a paranormal claim “to an independent panel.” Over time, the \$10 000 ballooned into The One Million Dollar Paranormal Challenge.

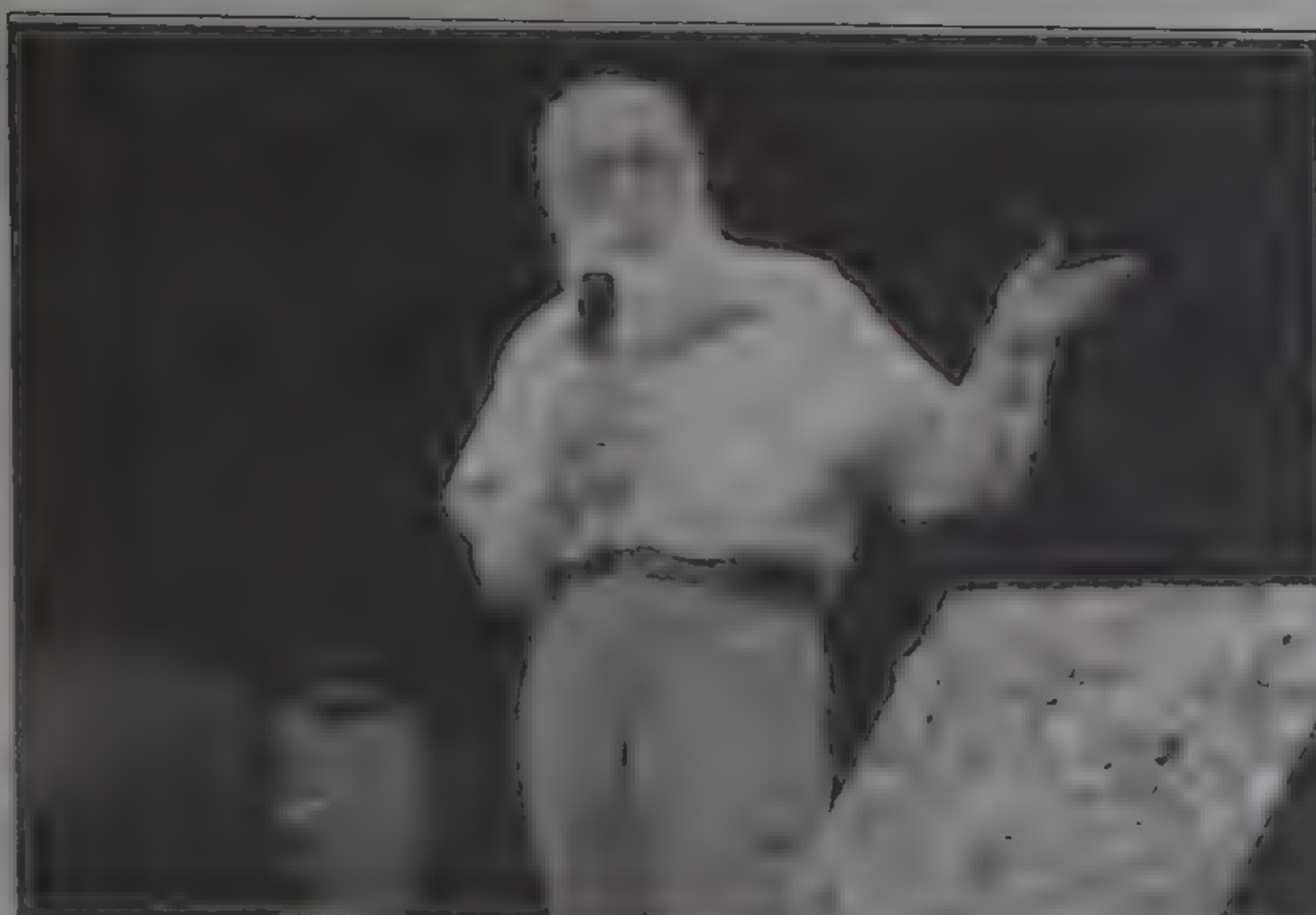
Everyone from mentalist Uri Geller to spiritualist-cum-psychic Sylvia Brown have been challenged to take his million dollars, but nobody serious seemed to want his money, and over the years he only attracted the attention of inexperienced loons.

“Sylvia Brown did agree to take the challenge eight years ago ... on the Larry King show, but she then said that she couldn’t. She said she didn’t know how to contact me. She talked to the dead but she can’t contact me—and I’m in the phonebook.”

The money has stayed safe in an account, where it will until March of 2010, when the challenge will be discontinued to free up the money for better causes such as college scholarships.

But why dedicate a legacy to suffocating the fancies of so many people desperate looking for an alternative reality? What’s the harm in believing someone can mentally bend spoons or we can contact our dead loved ones through a medium, anyway?

“Well, what’s the harm of putting



someone on heroin and supplying them for the rest of their lives?” Randi counters.

Randi readily admits that he can’t relate very much to believers

“Since I was a very tiny child in Sunday school, I started to ask questions about what they were claiming to be true,” he recalls. “And I was told not to ask questions ... They threw me out of Sunday school.”

Randi wishes that he did have the personal experience of having to shed some sort of paranormal belief, because he says it would provide him a useful insight.

“I consider it an advantage because then you can understand why people believe in strange things.”

**DR MICHAEL SHERMER** knows why people believe in strange things. In fact, he wrote a book on it, entitled *Why People Believe Weird Things: Pseudoscience, Superstition, and Other Confusions of Our Time*, which de-mythed everything from alien abductions to creationism to Jewish holocaust denialism

Unlike Randi, Shermer does have the advantage of once having been a

true believer. In his youth, he was an evangelical Christian, and, in his adult years as a marathon bicyclist, he experienced an alien abduction “because of sleep deprivation.”

Shermer would later go on to publish *Skeptic* magazine and found the Skeptics Society, of which there are now approximately 55 000 members, including subscribing newsstands and bookstores. Shermer can be found more recently as one of several scientists coaxed into interviews for the anti-evolution documentary *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*, only to be portrayed as an uninformed, arrogant know-it-alls.

Shermer has been a long-time enemy of creationists. His book *Why Darwin Matters: The Case Against Intelligent Design*, a point-by-point breakdown of the logical fallacies in intelligent design, is one of his greatest triumphs, along with his work debunking “the holocaust deniers.”

More recently, his enemies have risen from the ashes of the World Trade Center in the form of 9/11 “Truthers.” After a 9/11 conspiracy-themed issue of *Skeptic* irked Truthers, he found them popping up everywhere, heckling him

along his latest national book tour.

Shermer says heaps of evidence against the Truthers’ claims is unnecessary

“You know how we know that the Bush administration did not orchestrate 9/11? Because it worked.”

The Skeptics Society is now 16 years old and members include Bill Nye “The Science Guy,” *Saturday Night Live* alumnus Julia Sweeney, biologist Richard Dawkins and popular astronomer Neil deGrasse Tyson

**DR STEVEN NOVELLA**, an academic clinical neurologist at Yale University, is not a member. Instead, he co-founded the his own organization, the New England Skeptical Society. After the Society plateaued in terms of membership and the maintenance of newsletter writing and distributing became too heavy, he started the *Skeptics Guide to the Universe (SGU)* podcast

Perhaps no program has been more successful in popularizing scientific skepticism the way *SGU* has. Novella hosts *SGU* with his panel of comical skeptic “rogues,” which include his brothers Jay and Bob, Even Bernstein and Rebecca Watson—who also operates *Skepchic.org* and has become the Lucy Lawless of science geek circles. *SGU* consistently sits in iTunes’ top 10 science podcasts and enjoys a weekly listenership of about 40 000

If Randi and Shermer have turned detecting bullshit into professions, Novella has turned it into an all-out obsession. Not only does he run *NESS*, host and produce *SGU* as well as a second skeptical podcast, but he also contributes to three thorough critical thinking blogs and stars in *The Skeptologists*, a television pilot currently being shopped around

“Skepticism is empowering,” he says, “because it enables you to see through the BS and arrive at a conclu-

CONTINUES ON PAGE 11

## Top 5 scam artists

We’ve all been hustled. Whether it was buying an oregano-filled joint or the time Tommy bet you a nickel he would kiss Mary Sue only to learn that Mary-Sue was in on it too. But while these small-timers destroy an evening at most, some scam artists have destroyed entire families’ lives. There are far too many faith healers, spirit mediums, pyramid schemers and snake oil salespeople waiting to pounce on your pockets, but here’s a short primer on five of the most infamous and dangerous swindlers out there.

**1. BENNY HINN** is the richest faith healer in the world. By “curing” AIDS, cancer and even crossed-eyes on television, his ministry accumulates over \$100 million a year, all tax free. With all that money, What Would Benny Hinn Do? He’d buy a \$10 million-dollar home, stay in a \$10 000-a-night hotel and purchase a private jet that costs \$112 000 per month to fuel. When asked to be interviewed on *Dateline*, he evaded the offer because “the Lord said don’t.” Let’s see if the Lord can get him out of the current US senatorial investigation of his expenses

**2. DR MATTHIAS RATH’S** prescription for everything—cancer, strokes, atherosclerosis—is vitamins. According to his website, “Dr Rath has made scientific discoveries that rank among the most important discoveries of all time in the field of medicine.” Rath dismisses his opponents as pharmaceutical minions. Banned from advertising in most western nations, Rath took to South Africa, where he claimed antiretroviral drugs for treating HIV were “poison” and his vitamin soup was better. It is unknown how many people died because they replaced the proper treatment with his, however, last June the South African government joined the list of nations banning Rath’s medical trials.

**3. DICK DEVOS AND STEVE VAN ANDEL** are the inheritors of Quixtar, the company left to them by their billionaire fathers. Call it a pyramid scheme, call it multi-level marketing, or, better yet, call it by its original brand name. Anyway Quixtar created a pseudo-religion where God is money and its prophets are the success stories recorded in expensive tapes and books. Quixtar has convinced millions around the world that they too can make six figures simply by selling “the best” soap, vitamins and other amazing products, when the actual average annual income of a recruiter is \$1400. Some even lose money at the cost of the recommended seminars and audio tapes

**4. KEVIN TRUDEAU’S** ubiquitous infomercials peddle books with weight, debt and illness cures “*They Don’t Want You to Know About*. Why is he selling books? Because it’s all that the FTC allows him to sell. After losing his licence to a trove of scam products like the Mega Memory System, which promised to teach impeccable visual memory techniques, and Hair Farming, which claimed to prevent hair loss, Trudeau sells books because they’re protected by the First Amendment. But that’s just the first loophole; the books are supposed to uncover government and corporate conspiracies withholding cures to diseases and illnesses, but the chapters usually lead to his pay-for-membership-only website for more information.

**5. SYLVIA BROWN** is not much different from other psychic mediums except that she doesn’t always please the bereaved people desperately seeking her heavenly connections. On YouTube you can find videos of her trying to convince a widow that her husband drowned to death (he was a fireman killed on 9/11), telling the parents of a missing boy their son was dead (he was later discovered alive) and informing a woman that her granddaughter had been sold into Japanese sex slavery (she was, unfortunately, dead ... in America). Brown has sold millions of books and has recently passed her “powers” on to her apprenticing son, Chris Dufresne.

—OMAR MOUALLEM / omar@vuwweekly.com



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sion that is more likely to be true."

As a neurologist, he often sees ailing patients who've been duped by pseudoscientific medicine, and because they delayed mainstream medical treatment, found their ailments had spread beyond repair.

He's been an strong opponent of pseudoscientific medicine and purveyors of anti-vaccination propaganda, especially the autism and vaccine linkage conspiracy theory. On occasion, he says, patients who believe in the connection between vaccines and autism confront him.

"[They] seem to be driven by the negative, visceral reaction to injecting children with drugs ... But I just relay the evidence." The evidence, argues he and Michael Shermer, is in the removal of thimerosal mercury (the alleged autism-causing agent) from vaccines in 1999, and a rise in the number of autism diagnoses over the same period. The problem is obviously not the mercury additive, he argues, but more likely a broadening of the definition of autism—knowledge resulting from medical science and scientific inquiries.

But Novella says he can't stop everyone because most proponents of pseudoscientific alternative medicines and such "have already bought into the belief system ... they've already drank the Kool-Aid."

An admitted nerd with "full sci-fi geek cred," Novella sees parallels

between the psyche of the believers and role playing.

"I've been involved in the past in live action role playing, and it's lots of fun," he says like a proud sinner in confession. "But you know that it's 100 per cent fantasy. [For believers] this is their fantasy—like ghost hunting is what they do on the weekends to entertain themselves, when they should just play D&D and get it out of their systems."

Richard Wiseman, fellow skeptic and author of *Quirkology*, recently remarked at The Amazing Meeting—a skeptics convention hosted by Randi's foundation—that "skeptics are punching way above their weight." That's something Novella not only acknowledges, but embraces.

"For the number of people that we are, we are having a disproportionately large effect on the public conversation that's taking place."

He points to hit TV shows like *Penn & Teller: Bullshit!* and *Myth-Busters* as a testament to the impact of skeptics, but says the most important factor is the advent of Web 2.0, which through blogs, videos and podcasts has allowed their often-smothered voices to vociferate across the universe, and scream "Bullshit!" when they see or smell it.

"Ten years ago, if I cashed a cheque at the bank from the 'New England Skeptical Society,' that would almost universally provoke a giggle. Now they get it: 'You're the guys that don't believe in ghosts!'" ▼

# Tar sands an ET plot

## Suffering from eco-anxiety? Don't fret, blame the aliens

OMAR MOUALLEM / [omar@vueweekly.com](mailto:omar@vueweekly.com)

**W**e're all screwed. For the sake of a booming economy, we Albertans have raped our own environment. And now the guilt reeks like a spilled jersey. The least Stelmach can offer us is some eco-anxiety therapy or a support group to help us live with ourselves.

But wait! The editors of *The Canadian* have uncovered a secret so dangerous, so mysterious, so wonderfully absolving that we may never have to spit at our own reflections again.

According to an article published some months ago on their website—"Gnostic insights illuminate Alberta Tar Sands prosperity as an apparent Manipulative Extraterrestrial Virtual Reality illusion" [sic]—blaming ourselves, the Tories or even Syncrude will get us nowhere. The real enemies are aliens.

The secret, "documented in great detail by the ancient Gnostics, as revealed by Dr John Lash" then regurgitated by journalist Peter Tremblay, claims the Alberta tar sands and its consequential environmental damage is just one of many elements in a virtual reality set up by

## RANDOM

an alien race determined to witness our self-destruction.

"The artificial alien intelligence identified by the Gnostics has used the basic principles associated with the motivational virtual reality features of a video game, and projected that into a Three-Dimensional context on top of our planet Earth," writes Tremblay. "The Stephen Harper government ... is a further layer of a virtual reality fantasy."

In another article for *The Canadian*, Tremblay suggests that the same cunning aliens are to blame for homelessness.

**AS STEVEN NOVELLA**, president of the New England Skeptical Society, pointed out in his *Skeptics' Guide To The Universe* podcast, the article is "unfalsifiable": "Any evidence that contradicts this [can be interpreted as] a virtual reality evidence planted by the aliens."

Another critic, Armando Duke of *AXcess News*, dismisses the virtual reality claims, but doesn't

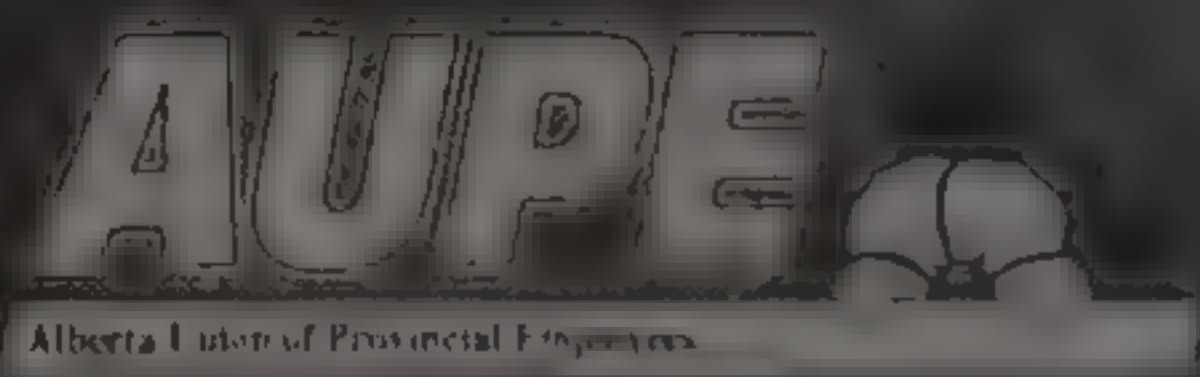
doubt aliens are visiting our province. He suggests the aliens are hovering over Alberta's toxic wastelands because it reminds them of the lunar surface, and the nostalgia experienced in our air-space accounts for the rise in local UFO sightings.

Ironically, Tremblay's article works against the very environmental and humanitarian causes he advocates. By absolving humans of fault, they are no longer accountable for the destruction of their planet. It becomes an issue that is out of their hands, so why try changing it? We apparently live in a video game like the slapped-around-hookers of *Grand Theft Auto*. We (Stelmach and Syncrude included) are on autopilot.

Neither Tremblay nor Dr Lash would answer my questions, perhaps thinking I too am just another element seeded by the master aliens. And maybe I am. Maybe I am and I don't know it, or I know it and I'm not telling. Maybe the entire purpose of this article was to ridicule the very truth driving your demise. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm late for my four o'clock anal probing. ▼

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# Medical merde

HEALTH

WELL, WELL, WELL

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Some consider my words BS; I consider much mainstream health coverage, though, to be BS. I'm definitely in need of balance and clarification. My list of commonly accepted wisdoms to be taken with a generous sprinkling of salt includes the following.

"Medical journals deliver the truth as revealed by good science." Sometimes, though they also deliver articles ghost-written by Pharma reps.

"Drug benefits outweigh the risks." Sometimes, though not nearly as often as we'd like to believe. *The Canadian Medical Association Journal* (CMAJ) reports that 23 000 Canadians die annually from drug-related problems. Fourteen million emergency room visits each year are due to adverse drug events, and the leading cause of liver disease and liver failure—ahead of viral hepatitis—is drug toxicity.

"Pot is dangerous and has earned its status as an illegal substance." There's plenty of evidence of pot's therapeutic value for many things, a list that goes way beyond the few extremes of illness that can earn us a license for medical use. And to achieve the same therapeutic value delivered by a couple of hits of relatively low-strength two to four per cent THC pot, the recommended dosage of

Marinol must be multiplied eight times.

"The flu kills thousands of us each year; the flu shot is the answer." The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports 63 000 deaths due to influenza complications, but according to those who have looked more closely at CDC statistics, the flu kills infinitely fewer than that, more like about 1000 each year, most cases involving those who are already immune-compromised and very likely not potentially helped by a vaccine either. But it is the job of public health departments to persuade the masses to get vaccinated, and fear is the most powerful way to achieve that goal. And ironically, very few of us know the significant little fact that increasing our vitamin D intake reduces the incidence of flu by 70 per cent.

"They're looking for a cancer cure." Sort of. But a cure would kill the medical-industrial complex, and the truth is that those who speak about things that truly cure or prevent are marginalized, dismissed and silenced, much like political dissidents are put on watch lists.

"Tamoxifen blocks estrogen receptors and is an excellent breast-cancer fighting tool." It also increases risk for a number of cancers, now possibly including risk of the very cancer it's supposed to be preventing.

"STATINS ARE A SAFE heart-disease prevention tool." Science has clearly shown otherwise.

"SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) are a safe and effective treatment for depression and related disorders."

They come with significant risk of suicide, diabetes, irreversible neurological damage, weight gain, loss of libido and cancer.

"Natural and alternative health approaches are either unsafe, or ineffective, or both." They are most often both safe and effective, and need to make their way into the hands and knowledge base of doctors. They don't need to be marginalized and treated as quackery.

"Health Canada has listened to the voices of Canadians regarding C-51 and will keep natural health products completely separate from drugs and regulate them in ways appropriate to their low risk." Separate, but not. Director of Offices of Patented Medicines and Liaison David K Lee tells me, "NHPs will be regulated separately by the Natural Health Products Directorate. But they will remain under the umbrella of therapeutic products."

"Low-carb eating is unsafe." For some, low-carb eating is the only way to manage high-insulin production, the only way to keep weight down and reduce the risks associated with obesity.

The truth is that the way to keep deceit going is through repetition. As Vladimir Lenin said way back when, "A lie told often enough becomes the truth." Those in power and in the money know that. And as Bertrand Russell said in 1950, "There is no nonsense so arrant that it cannot be made the creed of the vast majority by adequate governmental action." ▼

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

EDMONTON TIMES

when PR works to conceal the relationship between the client and the message," he says. "Usually when they're doing that it's because there's something about the message that is suspect. I find that, in general, the worse the behaviour of the corporation, the more likely they are to use suspect methods. The more good a company is doing and the less harm, the less need it has to resort to covert methods to get its message out."

While he thinks that there should be more government oversight to ensure transparency and disclosure about the source of things like video news releases that PR firms provide to news outlets, which often run them unedited and without attribution, he cautions against too much regulation.

"I think people do need to be care-

ful about regulation because a lot of the techniques of public relations are really using communications tools that are guaranteed to everyone in a democracy. And I think we do have to be careful about not restricting use of those tools in a way that would undermine democracy itself. Free speech is pretty important."

He says that the efforts of organizations such as the Center for Media and Democracy and DeSmogBlog.com in exposing the activities of the PR industry can go a long way in limiting the influence on the public of covert forms of PR.

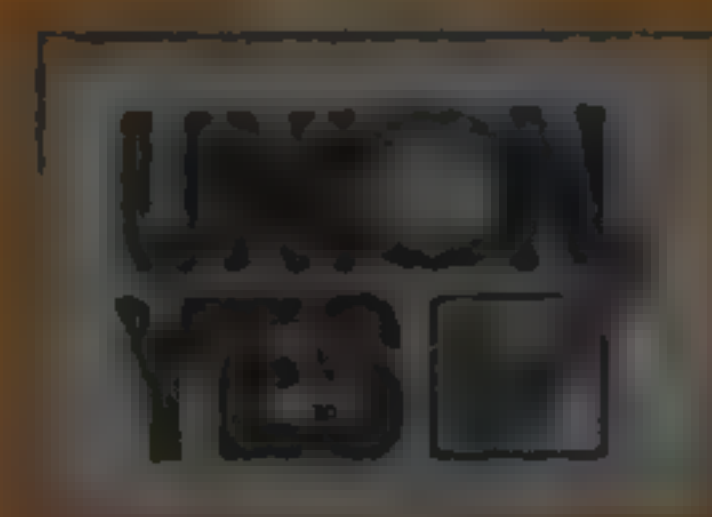
"People would do well to just generally have a careful attitude about information that they get from the media in particular—to realize that the information may have an agenda behind it," he says. "Simply realizing that will sometimes help in identifying who is the source of the message. Understanding the techniques used

by the PR industry, understanding that some of it is designed to look like independent news and approaching the information you get with something of a skeptical eye, I think goes a fair way to helping people see what's going on."

"The best advice a good PR person can give is the first thing you have to do is do the right thing," adds Grandia. "No amount of greenwash, no amount of public relations 'spin' is going to help your company in the long term. You will be found out, just like the tobacco companies were. Start doing the right thing and start telling people you're doing the right thing—that's not greenwashing if you're actually doing the right thing. You can communicate that and you can communicate it well and people will believe it over time if you continue to prove that what you're saying is what you're actually doing. That's how you build a good reputation." ▼

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# Pixels of bullshit

GAMES

## INFINITE LIVES

DARREN ZENKO  
infiniteives@vuwweekly.com

Downtown Toronto mega-club (well, *kilo*-club, at least; I'm not quite sure how high the bar for "mega" is set these days) packed with XBoxen, geek-media correspondents, game-makers and PR wranglers ... This is the X'08 press event, showcase for the 360's seasonal slate. Loud and flashy, high-def death and drama on countless flat screens, gunfire and chatter mixing with dozens of different soundtracks and whatever's whumping out of the house system ... and it's *hot*, soggy hot. The aircon strains to cope, keeping steam-table atmosphere of August Ontario out while simultaneously whisking away the waste heat of a hundred consoles and two or three times that many excited young men. Thank God for complimentary cold beer.

In the relative calm of the upper lounge, between the impressive life-sized Master Chief statue and the table of vulture-ravaged sandwiches, I help myself to a King of Beers and check my email. A note from my esteemed editor, reminding me this is the Bullshit Issue: "If there's some bullshit in the gaming world ..."

I'm sitting in the centre of an event engineered specifically to convert raw bullshit into usable hype; I figure I've got it made, this week. But ... maybe the BS here is too raw. PR is bullshit in its purest form; how do

you call bullshit on bullshit? It is what it is. I've got to get deeper ... below the surface of this lake of bullshit run stronger, stranger currents to be sniffed out ...

OK, first of all—or, first of all for the second time; I called this one four years ago, after the last X-event I attended—I call bullshit on nerd hygiene. Now, nerds have improved over the years; we've finally got the "how to maybe, possibly get laid someday" memo. Today's nerd is pretty good about pitstick, monitors his complexion clear, wears clean clothes, polishes his glasses and keeps his hair tidy if maybe a bit over-gelled. On a deeper level, though, it gets depressing.

On account of the free beer, I had multiple occasions to visit the club's restrooms. Each time, I lingered at the sink a bit longer than I had to (but not long enough to be creepy), observing the toilet habits of my people. No fewer than two-thirds left without washing their hands—hands that would go on to touch every controller in the place. Even after, you know ... number two, 66 per cent of the assembled boy-men were so eager to get back to their ninjas and space-guns that they couldn't be bothered to wash. Disgusted, I went handwashed OCD-style for the rest of the afternoon. So: bullshit on that, nerds; your fauxhawks and body sprays mean nothing if you've got poo-molecules all over your mitts.

AND, HEY, speaking of "ninjas?" Bullshit on *Naruto*. Sure, the *Naruto* game Ubi showed here seemed pretty cool and all, but I'll be

fucked if I'm going to dignify a yappy little acrobat in a diaper-ass neon-orange jumpsuit with the name "ninja." This kid's popularity is wrecking ninjendom for an entire generation. I mean, what would Snake-Eyes say?

Trick question, sucker! Snake-Eyes wouldn't say anything, because Snake-Eyes is a goddamn ninja! Hey speaks only through his actions, and his action only whisper "DEATH."

Also bullshit: "RPG elements." Look here, game developers; role-playing games involve creating a character, inhabiting that character, making story-changing decisions based on that assumed persona, and developing the character as the story progresses. You can't just tack some manky skill tree onto any old game and expect RPGers to drool over the pile you're shovelling. Telling me I ought to get excited for your off-the-shelf hack-and-slash action title because it has "RPG elements" is like telling me I ought to get excited about losing the use of my legs because wheelchairs have "Lamborghini elements" agricultural-grade bullshit.

Well, the event's winding down and they've closed down the open bar—kind of bullshitty, but I can't really complain. Hot 'n' summery evening's coming on and I've got some Torontonians pals to meet, maybe I'll just pop over to a liquor store and pick up a little ...

oh, wait. I can't do that, because it's evening on a Saturday, and Ontario's 80-year-old post-Prohibition liquor laws are complete and utter bullshit. ♡

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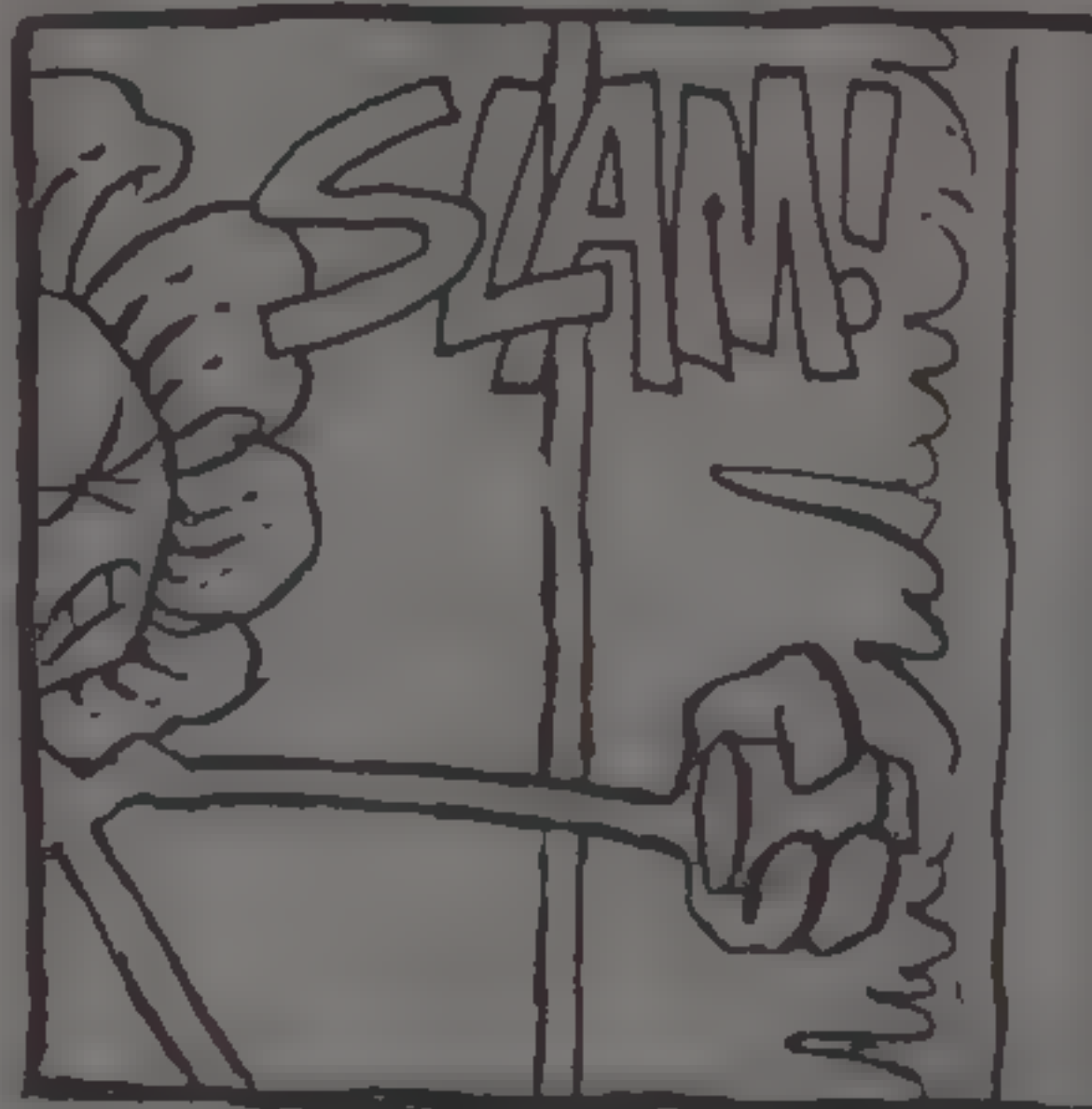
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For more information, please contact  
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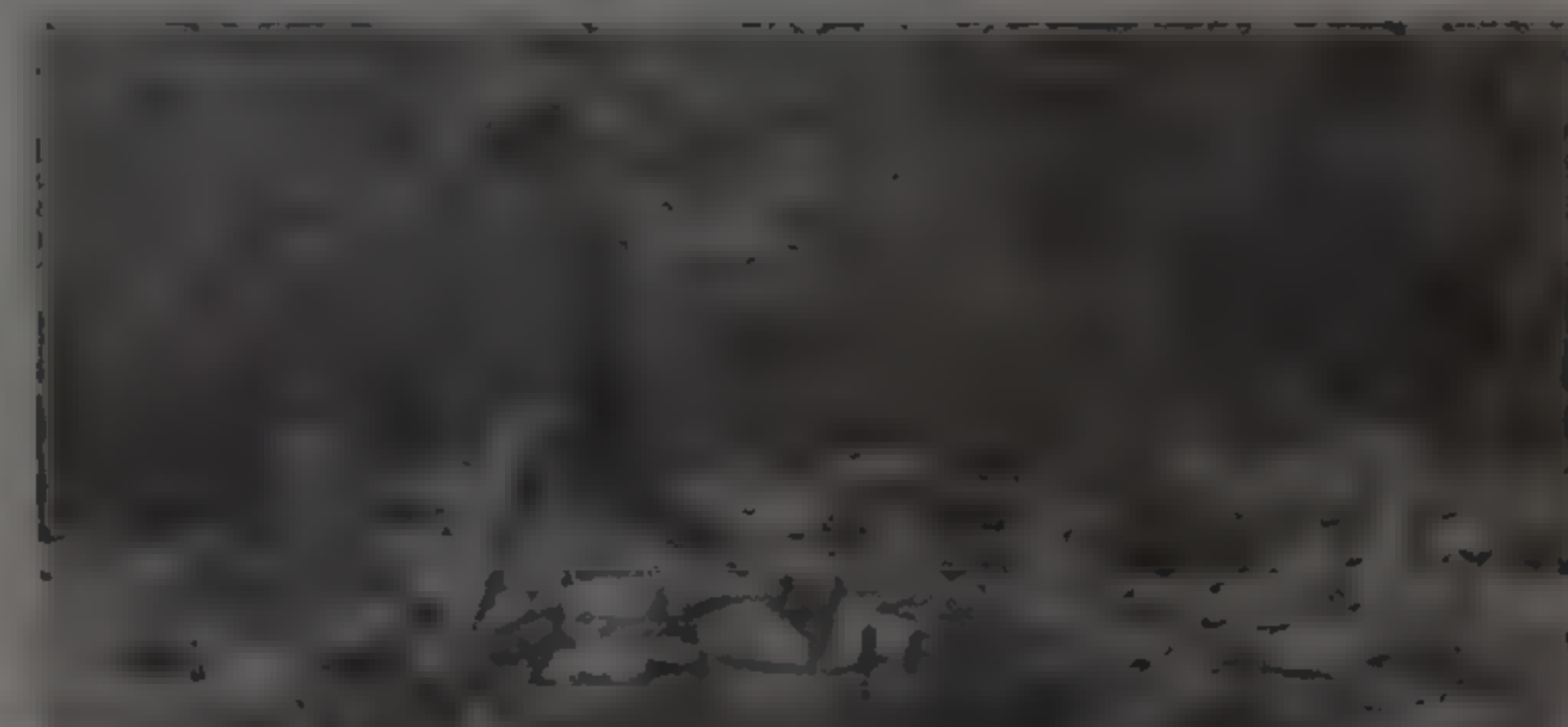
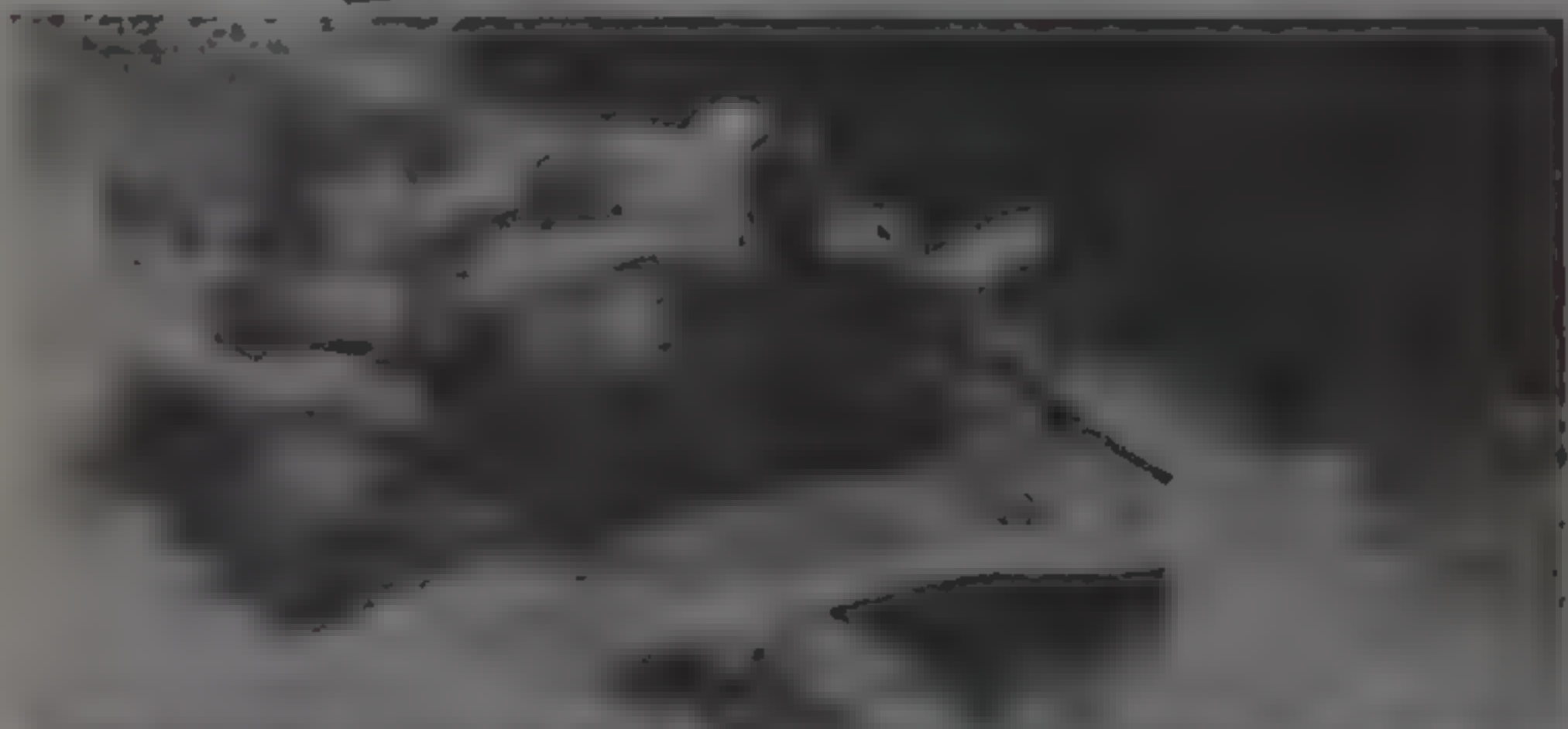


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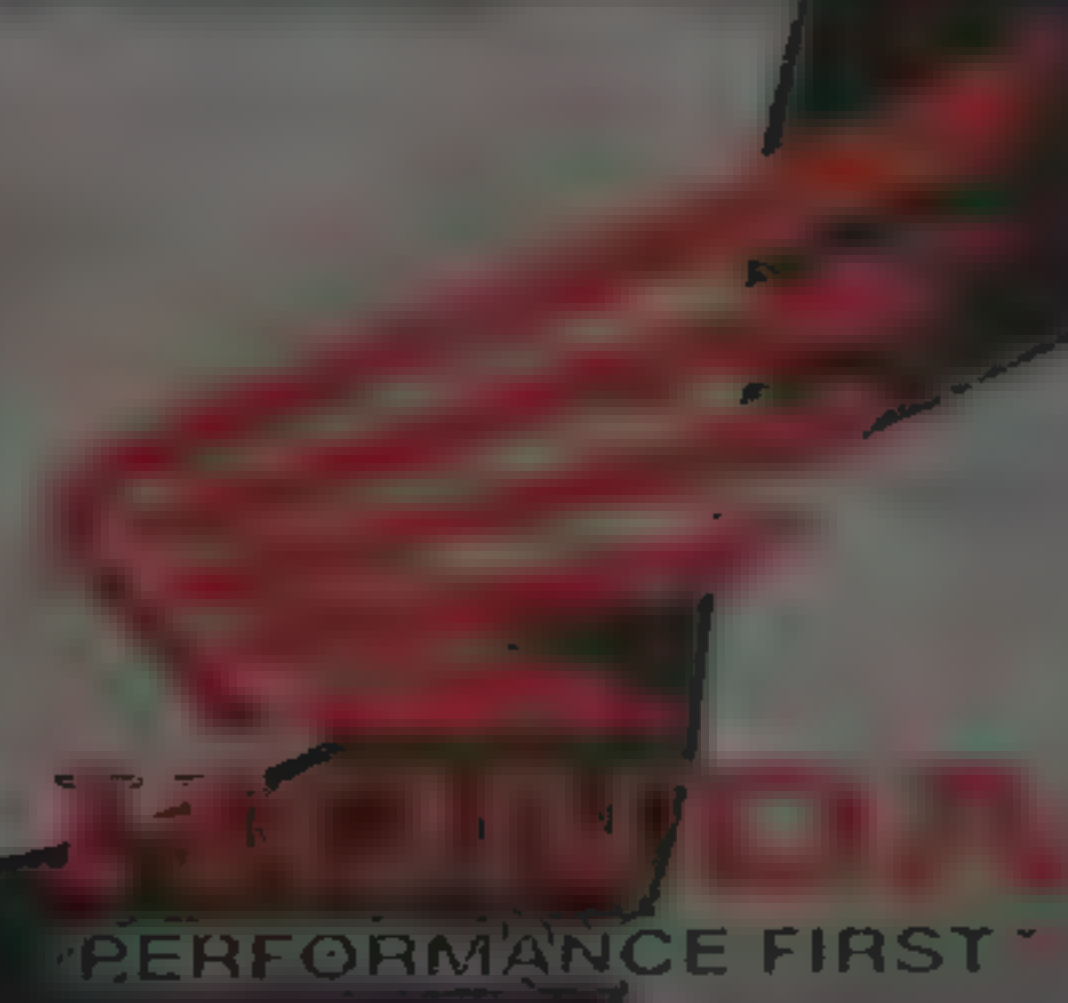


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# Lose weight the hard way

If it's all so easy, why are we all so big?

JAN HOSTYM / jan@vueweekly.com

I might as well start by apologizing in advance to everyone that I am about to offend. But seriously, "Lose Weight Easily" has got to be the dumbest, most inane and contradictory statement ever. I guess the millions of people whose fat rolls bounce happily along with each step choose to be that way 'cause they like it, not 'cause dieting or exercising is hard or time-consuming or just flat-out impossible sometimes. Google the phrase and you get 90 400 hits. Yikes. Maybe what's even dumber is us, believing it over and over—and over again. And "Lose Weight Quickly" doesn't fare much better on the stupidity scale.

Here are some pretty startling numbers, courtesy of Statistics Canada: in 2007, 16 per cent of Canadian adults (excluding those in the Northwest Territories—don't ask me why) aged 18 and over reported themselves as obese, and 32 per cent reported themselves as overweight; in 2004, 26 per cent of children and adolescents between two and 17 were either overweight or obese. And remember people, these are self-reported statistics—the real numbers could be, and probably are, higher.

I guess all those people would simply rather not take that magical pill or down that miraculous potion. They prefer to play Russian roulette with

## LOSE WEIGHT EASILY

their bodies and subject themselves to the myriad of health risks that go hand-in-hand with obesity; diabetes, heart disease, stroke, cancer, arthritis and high blood pressure are just a small drop in a big bucket of associated ailments.

Sorry, but that just doesn't make sense, no matter how you look at it. Yes, in a way we do choose to be fat—we eat too much and we move too little. Hand-to-mouth action doesn't count as strenuous activity. And yes, a big chunk of us do choose not to do anything about it. Well, maybe it's not quite as simple as that—maybe it's because losing weight and keeping it off is hard, so the majority of us are unsuccessful at it. We do try, some of us anyway. It seems like we, as a society, are always on diets. However, it just takes a tiny bit of common sense to figure out that if there was anything quick or easy about losing weight, we wouldn't be facing an obesity crisis.

SO WHY, brilliant as we are, do we spend so much of our hard-earned money on such bogus products?

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Alexandra Senkow of Defining Eve says it's a reflection of our society as a whole—the focus is on "instant gratification" and has moved away from "long-term planning." When we want something, we want something now.

But Alexandra says there are no quick fixes, especially when it comes to weight-loss. Our society's penchant of

streamlining everything in its quest to make it more efficient has people underestimating the amount of work they need to do for their health. She says you need to exercise—for either 30 minutes a day or for an hour 3-4 times a week. And you need to follow a healthy diet. There's no getting around the fact that it takes time and effort.

You also need to be realistic: people are surprised when she tells them that most women can't safely lose weight at a rate of more than half a pound to a pound a week. Seriously. We've been inundated with so many false claims that we've set our expectations so much higher, and that ultimately leads to disappointment and

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failure. We don't gain weight overnight and it makes sense that the opposite is also true—we don't lose it overnight either. So don't believe those 10 pounds in 10 days ads. More importantly, don't waste your money on the products they are hyping.

I wanted to get a dietician's take (actually, make that five dieticians) on this whole "lose weight quickly and easily" phenomenon but, for whatever reason, I was deemed unworthy of their time. I'm choosing to give them the benefit of the doubt and believe that they would have loved to have offered me their professional opinion but were simply too busy helping a multitude of people sort through the nutritional maze that we all face on a day-to-day basis.

My strictly non-professional opinion is that they would have echoed Alexandra's opinion. I believe they would have said that there is no such thing as quick and easy weight-loss and that it takes time, energy, exercise and a healthy eating plan. If I'm wrong, which I don't think I am, I'm definitely open to input.

So why are there so many products with such unsubstantiated claims

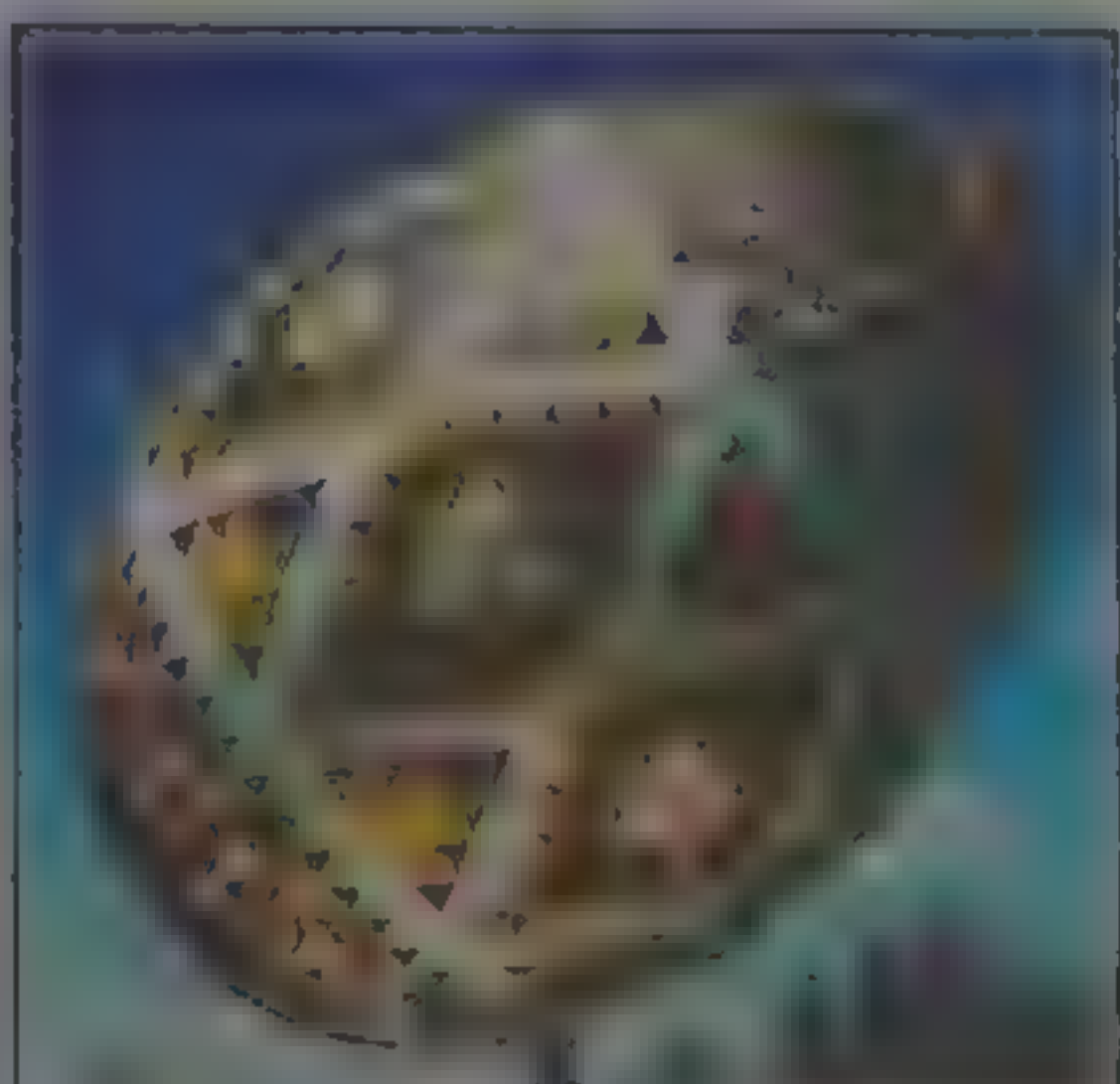
bombarding us around every corner? Because we, with our copious amount of so-called brain cells, continue to believe—or want to believe—in fairytales. We want to believe that there is a quick fix, that we can simply throw money at it and voilà, problem solved. As long as we spend a gazillion dollars every year supporting the products and people that make those claims, they are going to continue to make more. Stop buying the stuff and see what happens.

Sorry, this is turning into a rant but seriously everyone, there is no quick or easy way to lose weight. Don't waste your money. Don't support that industry. Don't buy into it. Period.

It doesn't take a Harvard education to figure out that these assertions couldn't possibly have even a smidgen of truth to them—because, if they did, why would our collective butts be increasing in size at such an alarming rate?

As Michael Pollan suggests in *In Defense of Food*: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." And while it's not quite as simple as that, it is certainly a good start. Just move your body while you're doing it. ▼

## FOOD NEWS! DISH WEEKLY



### AIN'T NO HARVEST LIKE A UKRAINIAN HARVEST

Break out the sour cream and grab your Baba, the Ukes are having a good, ol' fashioned harvest feast. On Sun, Sep 7, from 10 am to 6 pm, the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village—just east of Edmonton, on the road to the world's largest kubasa and pysanka—is hosting their annual Harvest of the Past and Taste of Heritage Food Fest. Featuring historic harvest activities, as well as an early riser pancake breakfast and a

chance to sample some of the finest Alberta-produced cuisine all day long. For more info call the Village at 780.662.3640 or visit their website at [tprc.ab.ca/uchv](http://tprc.ab.ca/uchv).

*Dish Weekly spills the beans on culinary events in Edmonton. Have an event our city's gourmands should know about? Just email [dish@vuwweekly.com](mailto:dish@vuwweekly.com)*

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## No 1 for summer

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HARDY TROTTER  
HARDY@THEGLOBE.COM

I always have the best intentions for summer. In the spring, as the days get longer and warmer, I make plans and resolutions, imagine camping trips and barbecues, dream up fantastic meals thrown together with the freshest ingredients. And then I blink, and it's August and my summer plans are used up, neglected or discarded. This is a bittersweet time of year, when we realize we have weeks, not months, of summer left to savour.

Maybe today's the day you should relax, take in some sun, and enjoy a classic summer drink. Summer drinks are usually associated with hot places: Spanish sangria, Brazilian mojito, Caribbean rum punch. These places know sun, but their people aren't familiar with lack of light. For a change, why not try a drink that is truly bittersweet? Pimm's No 1 is a summer classic from the Brits, who, like us, know what it's like to store up sun in preparation for grey days to come.

Pimm's has a long history, originating in 1823. James Pimm created and served the gin-based beverage as a digestive tonic at his oyster bar. Its composition is based on the sling, an old mixed-drink category. Before the cocktail, there was the sling, a basic-as-you-want-it-to-be mix of alcohol, sugar, water (sparkling or still), and possibly fruit, especially citrus. Pimm used this model, infusing a mix of herbs to create his secret recipe. The drink caught on, and Pimm soon began selling a bottled version to neighbouring bars. Variations of the drink, numbered 2 through 6 and based on different spirits, were developed and eventually abandoned. Pimm's No 1 remained, and became an old standby.

**LOOKING AT PIMM'S** and its rich tea-brown colour, it's not hard to see its Englishness. The flavour has citrus

sweetness and herbal complexity. Neither too sweet nor too bitter, the taste of Pimm's is light and refreshing, Britishly restrained. It can be served alone on ice, or, most commonly, in the drink that defines English summer—the Pimm's cup. Last year, 150 000 glasses of Pimm's Cup were sold at Wimbledon alone.

The Pimm's Cup is a good sangria alternative, as it's highly decorative, filled with farmer's market bounty. Think berries, apples, even cherries if you want. It's a riot of summer. Toss in slices of orange and lime, don't forget the essential cucumber, and don't neglect your garnish. Mint is perfect, and you can always

drop some in to steep in the alcohol as well. It compliments the herbal flavours of the liquor, and of course is a gorgeous summer green.

Pimm's goes with bubbles. The Pimm's Cup is great with lemon-lime soda (British lemonade), ginger ale or (my favourite, because it's got a bit more personality), ginger beer. If you're looking for a brunch choice, try Pimm's and champagne for a Pimm's Royale.

Because of its low alcohol content (25 per cent), Pimm's is a perfect afternoon or pre-dinner sipper. Add fruit and cucumber and you can savour it for hours without losing your stiff upper lip. ▽

### PIMM'S NO 1 CUP

*This drink can be any size you want. Make it by the glass or by the pitcher. Add any fruits and herbs you want, or keep it simple, but don't leave out the cucumber: its watery crunch is a great addition. If you have the time or inclination, let the fruit sit in the Pimm's for a bit to soak up some extra flavour before you start mixing.*

1 part Pimm's No 1  
2 parts lemon-lime soda, ginger ale or ginger beer  
A slice or wedge of cucumber  
Fruit: slices of orange, lime, apples; halved strawberries; anything else you feel like  
Sprigs of mint

*Measure Pimm's into a glass or pitcher. Add your fruits, and some mint if you want. Layer a generous amount of ice over the alcohol and fruits, then top up your glass with the soda of your choice. Mix, then add a slice or wedge of cucumber and serve.*

### PIMM'S ROYALE

1 part Pimm's No 1  
Fruit: slices of orange, lime, lemon, apple Fresh Mint  
Dry champagne or cava

*Add one part of Pimm's to a champagne glass, drop in fruit slices, then top the glass with champagne. Finish with a sprig of mint.*



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# 200+ years, 20th anniversary

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**SLEEMAN NO 20**  
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I have seen the billboards around town—clearly Sleeman was celebrating 20 years of something and they were releasing a special beer to commemorate it. But haven't they been brewing beer in Canada since 1834? I was confused.

So confused I decided to contact the brewery, just to get some clarifications. Little did I know that my call would be returned by Sleeman CEO John Sleeman. Nothing like getting it from the head poobah to find out what is going on.

Actually, John Sleeman says, the Sleeman family has been brewing beer since the 1700s, starting back in Cornwall, England. When they emigrated to Canada, they kept up their brewing tradition, starting their first brewery (under the family name of course) in 1834 and moving it to Guelph in 1850.

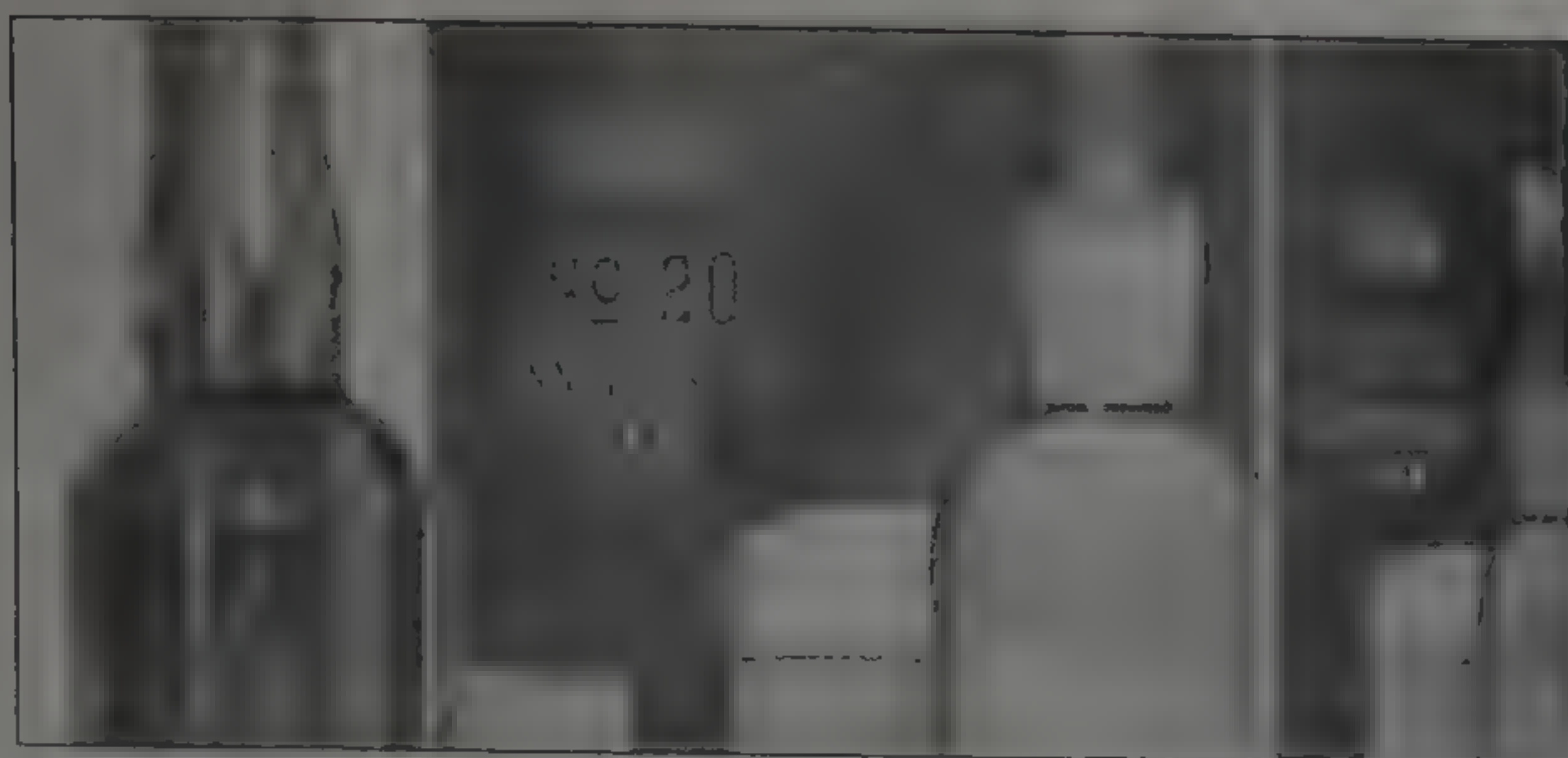
They were a successful regional brewer until Prohibition in the 1920s, when they were shut down like everyone else. Prohibition in Canada lasted until 1929, and when it was over the Sleemans immediately started back up.

"And just like the Bronfman's and many others, they looked south of the border, where Prohibition continued until 1933 and saw a chance to make money," says Sleeman. The brewery worked out an arrangement with Al Capone and other gangsters to illegally ship beer into the US. When they were finally caught, it was not by Elliot Ness and his team, but by Revenue Canada. "It was the Canadian government that finally caught them. It wasn't illegal to ship beer to the US under Canadian law, but it was illegal to not report the income."

The Sleemans were convicted of tax evasion and lost their brewing license—and the days of the family business were over. "Family lore tells it that the Ontario Liquor Commission said it wouldn't let anyone with the last name Sleeman receive a brewing license again," notes Sleeman.

This is all a fascinating story, but it does little to explain why the 20th anniversary this year—yet. Fast-forward 50 years.

"My aunt had kept hold of my grandfather's recipe book and one beer bottle," notes Sleeman, who in his early adulthood ran a British-style pub and owned a beer import business. "I decided I wanted to get into brewing. My aunt handed the recipe book and bottle to me and encouraged me



to resurrect the family business."

Clearly after 50 years, the Ontario Liquor Commission had mellowed, and they gave John Sleeman a license—that was in August 1988, 20 years ago this summer and the reason for the beer. "It is the 20th anniversary of Sleeman's Version Two," says Sleeman.

**TODAY, SLEEMAN'S** is Canada's third largest brewery, far bigger than any micro-brewery but still dwarfed by Molson and Labatt. Part of its brewing operations include Québec's Unibroue and BC's Okanagan Springs, which allows the company to take advantage of national economies of scale but still respond to regional tastes. The whole company was also bought out a couple years ago by Japanese giant Sapporo.

"I thought they would send me off to the beach somewhere, but instead they said, 'We don't know how you are doing it, but you are making money, so keep it up,' and left," says Sleeman. "They've been pretty hands off."

As for No 20, Sleeman says, "I wanted to brew a celebratory beer that would be appreciated by many but would still stand out."

Sleeman says the goal was a "traditional mild, low-hop British ale." They imported hops from Britain and used a traditional British ale strain. "We stuck with Canadian barley, though, as it is some of the best in the world."

After the interview I picked up a six-pack and tried one. It's a medium gold beer with an impressive white head. It's brilliantly clear. I find it a very attractive and inviting beer to look at.

The aroma is quiet, providing some light pilsner and grainy malt sweetness, mostly of specialty crystal malt quality. The flavour is similarly delicate. It is a gently malty beer with a soft grain sweetness. It has only the slightest touch of bitterness, barely above perception. The beer finishes a bit bigger than it looks, offering some substance in the palate.

It also offers a subtle fruitiness along the middle—which is the hallmark of a British ale. The fruity esters are formed by the yeast and give the beer a classic British feel.

There is no mistaking this as a pleasant, summery beer. It offers slightly more body than a pale lager, and will be received well by those who dislike bitterness. Personally I would have upped the hopping level a bit to give the beer a more multi-layered experience. I'm not talking about turning it into a pale ale, just enough to increase the complexity of the beer.

While it is a satisfying drink, I find myself wondering if it rates a "20th Anniversary" moniker. It is subtle, clean and pleasant but doesn't jump out as a once-in-a-lifetime beer. Which is because maybe it isn't.

I asked John Sleeman whether No 20 is a one-time beer. "We don't know," was his reply. "We will commit to it this summer and see how it goes. If people like it, it might return."

No 20 might soon be the latest addition to the Sleeman's line-up. Only time will tell. ▽

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# Monorail! Monorail! Monorail!

High-profile projects like the AGA and the arena go about building a world-class city the wrong way

MATTHEW HALLIDAY / matthew@vuweekly.com

**B**ullshit might be too strong a word, but Randall Stout's \$88-million-dollar redesign of the Art Gallery of Alberta is at least, I don't know, bullspit.

Don't get me wrong. On some levels, it's a pretty damn exciting project, and here's hoping it's a great big roaring success. But while Edmonton hemorrhages new subdivisions like an urban hemophiliac and lets its already thin-on-the-ground historical treasures fall into shameful disrepair (is anyone even trying to do anything to save the sad wreck of the Arlington Apartments?), there seems to be a contingent at City Hall and in the media (\*cough\* Scott McKeen \*cough\*) who believe that Edmonton's future as a big-league urban player lies not in cultivating a more sustainable, neighbourly, close-knit city, with walkable streets and old-fashioned urban neighbourhoods, but in a few grandiose civic gestures. The point of view is pretty well summed up by this little bit of hyperbole from the AGA website: "The gallery in itself will be a work of art that will complement and complete the cultural precinct surrounding Churchill Square and solidify Alberta's Capital as a world-class city, epitomizing Edmonton's 2007 Cultural Capital of Canada designation."

Did you hear that? World class! Oh boy! The thinking seems to be that a few landmark attention-grabbers like this (the proposed downtown arena being another) will catapult us to the urban big leagues, and I'm not sure what's sadder: that misguided belief, or the fact that we think Randall Stout's incoherent, discordant slab of ugly is just such a landmark.

Stout, of course, is a one-time understudy of starchitect Frank Gehry, the man who helped kicked off the latest craze for tourist-magnet civic institutions with his Guggenheim museum in Bilbao in 1997, of which the new AGA looks like a stillborn sibling. Stout takes Gehry's sensuous, shimmering ribbons of steel and concrete and puts a bargain-basement spin on them. (Even more galling is the fact that we're paying \$88 million for his second-rate services, when we just turned down local architect Gene Dub's ethereal, beautiful city entrance pyramids, a relative bargain at \$2 million.)

The AGA's website calls Stout's



## BIG BUILDINGS

design an "architectural icon [that] will draw visitors from around the world." Oh, c'mon. Not one person, anywhere, is going to be sufficiently intrigued by Stout's work to snap up a plane ticket and fly out here. At least, not when they could visit his nearly identical ugly-making projects in such cultural epicentres as Chatanooga, Tennessee and Roanoke, Virginia. (Do a Google image search for "Hunter Museum of American Art" in Chattanooga. From some angles it looks like a Borg spaceship, while from others it looks like three ugly buildings melted into super-ugly one.) And as *Globe and Mail* architectural critic Lisa Rochon pointed in a 2005 piece, only 9000 square feet of the museum's new space will be dedicated to art. More than 20 000 will go to retail,

restaurants and "public space," presumably so we can buy mugs and T-shirts with the AGA logo—though to be fair, there will be substantially more classroom space in the new building.

**EVEN MORE UNFORTUNATE** is the fact that superior proposals were passed up. Will Alsop's weird and wonderful multi-hued box design, reportedly the early favourite, was booted to the curb (maybe because Alsop was reported to have had some harsh words for Edmonton, saying to the jury responsible for choosing the design, "I have to say I hated Edmonton").

But all that aside, the AGA's biggest problem isn't whether or not it's housed in a building worthy of being featured in *Architectural Digest*. Its biggest worry should be bringing in patrons.

The biggest exhibit of the past few years was probably Jesse Sherburne's

*Art Bar*, which was likely so successful because it enabled scenesters to get drunk in an environment more pretentious—and therefore more self-satisfying to one's personal vanity—than the Black Dog. Besides that, has there been anything close to a blockbuster exhibit? Not that an art gallery's mandate is to draw enormous crowds, but for a city of over a million people to only draw 35 000 people to its art gallery in a given year, many of whom are undoubtedly out-of-towners and repeat customers, is fairly pathetic. (Consider that the Vancouver Art Gallery drew over 200 000 patrons for a single exhibit last year. Vancouver's bigger, but not that much bigger.) The AGA is expecting 120 000 to 150 000 annual visitors once the new building is opened, but their logic seems lacking. Certainly the new building will draw the curious for a few months, but will it really translate into a permanent five-fold increase in patronage?

Sounds like wishful thinking to me.

Please don't take this the wrong way, AGA. I love you. I'm one of your best customers, in fact. Every time a new exhibit opens, I'm there. But all too often, I'm disappointed. When the *Projections* exhibit was going on this spring, what was up with the broken projectors, and the noisy installations in too-close proximity to one another? Or the undercooked *Generation* show? And what to make of the frequently alienating, academic tone the gallery takes in promoting itself? A major public gallery can't appeal only to the MFA crowd. Take this description of the *Seeing Through Modernism* taken from the AGA's website: "During the 1970s and 1980s, Edmonton was recognized internationally as a centre for the creation and collection of modernist painting and sculpture. For many artists, curators and collectors, the legitimization of the primary principles of modernism—medium specificity and aesthetic autonomy—that were supported by the city's two largest art institutions—The Edmonton Art Gallery and the University of Alberta—was a welcome refuge from the post-modernist discourse that was effecting [sic] art production elsewhere."

Allow me to try and penetrate the jargon: "During the 1970s and 1980s, Edmonton was several decades behind an international art scene that had left modernism behind decades ago. Now here's a graceless, jargon-heavy sentence few of you will understand."

All the hullabaloo over the new AGA, or a downtown stadium, or a casino, or whatever else, sort of reminds me of that episode of *The Simpsons* in which a slick huckster tries to sell the people of Springfield on a big-city-style monorail system, only to deliver a shoddy, second-rate piece of crap before he splits town. And the monorail wasn't Springfield's only folly—other ambitious but stupid projects included a giant magnifying glass, a popsicle stick skyscraper and an escalator to nowhere.

Is the AGA our popsicle stick skyscraper? Is a downtown arena our escalator to nowhere? A great city isn't made of hype, it's made of streets and neighbourhoods and people. The museums and galleries and monuments to our greatness will only come when we are great. For now, let's just try and build ourselves a real city. ▽



# GOOD DESIGN, POOR TASTE.

BRYAN HUMPHREY

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# Art attack!

## Art is awesome, but art bullshit stinks

MARY CHURCH O'NEILL / marychurch@vancouverweekly.com

**H**ooray for art! Unfortunately, it comes with a heaping helping of bullshit, some endemic to the art industry on a global scale, some regionalized or limited to a genre or sector of the community. Here are things that'd clear the air if we could put them on the dung-heap.

### END-CAREER LEAD-TECHING

Around eight years into the industry, opportunities and tasks begin to feel repetitive and limited, and you yearn for new responsibilities and to put ideas into play without having to run the gauntlet of "no." But there's a bottleneck in smallish art scenes like ours. People in key positions in established institutions and organizations are entrenched, perhaps for life, and there's an endless litter of the young and hungry willing to work Dickensian conditions below you. Mid-career arts people (and often artists) get sandwiched between them, usually saddled with student debt, with little room to develop or make a wage that allows them to sleep on a mattress that's off the floor. And that's the point when many leave the city or cultural sector—taking their skills and talent with them. I'm not suggesting *Logan's Run* culling, but we should address this as a community.

### "EVERYONE'S AN ARTIST" MEME

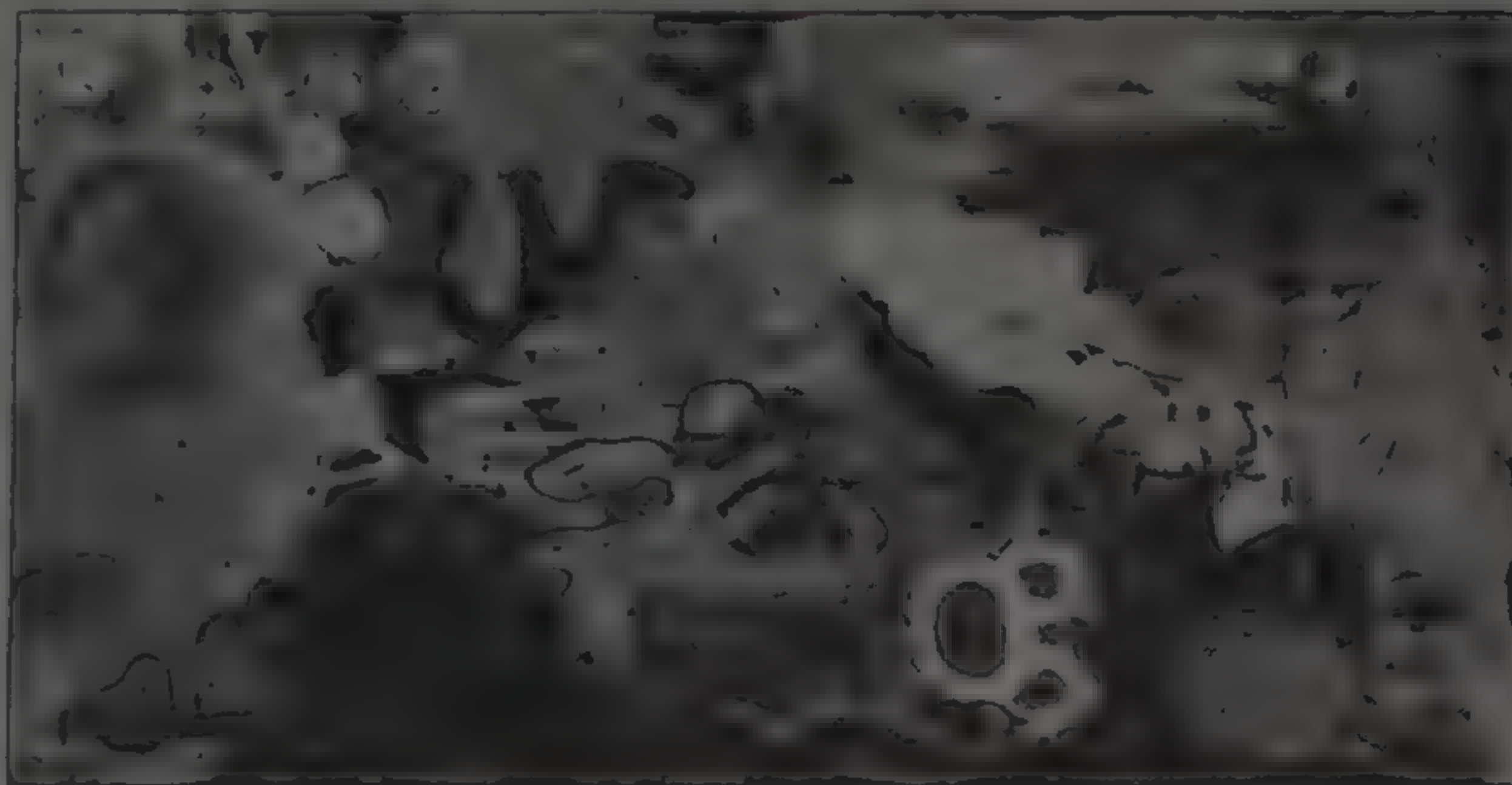
Despite a gajillion feel-good books about unleashing your inner artist, it's a cultural misunderstanding that simultaneously mythologizes art while dismissing its importance. This has little to do with skill and formal training—there are self-taught and academic artists; fantastic ones who can't draw a convincing snake and artistically sterile technical adepts. There's no disputing humans have innate creativity and can experience the pleasure of drawing or printmaking or whatever. But we're failing to communicate what art is to the public and invite participation in a way that doesn't minimize the cultural function of genuine artists—professionals engaged with interpreting the forces of society through their unique practices, holding up a wonderland mirror and beckoning us to explore ourselves.

### ARTISTS AS SHOCK TROOPS FOR GENTRIFICATION

This may soon be mitigated by EAC Cultural Plan recommendations, but it's frustrating to root in marginal neighbourhoods, accept those risks and conditions, and be priced out by developers benefiting from your community-building at your expense. It's bitter when you're also having to defend the *raison d'être* of art to the same people.

### SOCIAL CONTRACT ID

Everyone in the arts is a *de facto* ambassador for the arts. We need to



switch the script from defensive to factual: interpreting our society through multiple views matters. Just because culture relies on public money in Canada doesn't mean we have to apologize for it. Challenge people to imagine a world where the only culture they encounter is advertising-based and dictated by demographics—or maybe just drop them off at South Edmonton Common without pants, call it a performance piece and get a grant for it.

### ARTIST STATEMENTS

Sometimes these are insightful documents that deepen our understanding and appreciation of work. Often they're just grant- or academic-oriented jargon-heavy baubles that become a barrier to non-artmakers.

### OVER-RELIANCE ON THEORY

I've read critical/cultural theory—Derrida, Barthes, Irigaray, semioticians, the post-humanists, cultural relativists, etc. Some of their ideas and writing were beautiful and evocative, but some were self-justifying intellectual fictions by very smart people. Actually, the real problem is how they're used as weapons by people trying to control discourse around art and culture. Intellectuals are informed by historical and contemporary work worldwide, but carrying *Speculum of the Other Woman* around doesn't automatically transform today's Edmonton to Paris in the '70s, and no one has the right to fossilize thought based on an awesome book they're totally into. Post-modernists and relativists have enabled anti-science attitudes with real-word consequences, and we're complicit in distancing art from the public sphere, because for a while, if you couldn't speak Lacan-ese, you were excluded from the discussion. Their proponents basically locked "regular" people out of art and culture, and bear some responsibility for the general dumbing down of popular culture.

PHOTOGRAPH BY [illegible]

### THE CLEMENT GREENBERG EXPERIENCE

So people in Edmonton had him over for dinner sometime in the '70s. It doesn't make him relevant now, and I bet a New York critic with a sky-high

## BS | ARTS

ego wouldn't be having dinner in Edmonton in the '70s if he were still relevant in New York at the time. Yes, he defined part of mid-20th century art and art criticism. Yes, he's a writer with provocative ideas. Yes, his connection with the Edmonton Art Gallery shaped the AGA collection and influenced university departments, so he's a legitimate part of our history and continuing dialogue on art. But it's pathetic he's considered the end point of all artistic development by a vocal minority of our art community. Art is an onward story with multiple threads, not a mausoleum of ideas with one heroic thrust inherited from New York or London. Focusing on an iconic figure the rest of the universe already put in proper historical context isn't worldly—it's the definition of provincial. Anne Whitelaw did a fine job this year of dealing with Greenberg's local legacy—now let's move on.

### WHYPLASH CULTURE

I love Edmonton's refreshingly non-uptight DIY backbone—makeshift galleries, rock & art shows, genre-bending collaborations. But I wonder if the roiling creative energy pressures artists to show without having breathing space to let interesting ideas fully flower. Maybe this is a byproduct of digital culture and social networking, making us perceive constant competition. Nevertheless, I'd like to see ideas pushed further before being discarded for something else. I get that new projects are exciting and bring in opportunity and sometimes money, and in-process ideas should absolutely remain a component of Dirt City culture, but let's apply DIY to solutions that let us stay creative and flexible while feeding our practices. Can we organize informal artist swaps with cities like Victoria and Winnipeg so we can share a body of work while crafting another without relying on the whims of established organizations or over-showing here? DIY residencies? Establish a fund based on a microloans model to address gaps in our funding? ▼

# Looking for America

BOOKS

HOPSCOTCH

JUSTE HANIN

hopscotch@vancouverweekly.com

A nation is a living thing, and as a living thing—not to mention a thing of tremendous potential for both prosperity and peril—it requires ongoing examination. Definitions of nations are useful, yet they are not fixed, and as the US rapidly builds toward a new opportunity to redefine itself following a tumultuous period simultaneously characterized by unprecedented power and influence and unprecedented international disdain, it's as good a time as ever to take the long view.

With *What is America?: A Short History of the New World Order* (Knopf, \$29.95), essayist Ronald Wright, author of *Time Among the Maya*, *Stolen Continents* and *A Short History of Progress*, does just that, surveying the trends in American life from the arrival of the first Europeans and the gradual crushing of the old Americans by the new. The national character as described in this new book's pages—one that is forever "losing its innocence" thanks to an unusually strong penchant for historical amnesia—is not very much flattered to say the least, and Wright's aim is not to pat anyone on the back but rather to flush out the essential, long-circulating venom that plagues the heart of what, like it or not, is our world's best hope. (Okay, them and maybe the European Union, but that would surely call for another book.)

*What is America?* is, as Wright admits, an eccentric book. As concise in volume as it is expansive in chronology, it spends precious little ink reiterating certain historical events, however enormous in implication, that have been exhaustively dealt with elsewhere. Thus slavery and the Civil War, to name two sweeping examples, are duly accounted for in the book's thesis but left largely undiscussed in favour of more iconoclastic takes on other, still more unruly histories, such as that of the centuries-in-the-making extermination of Native Americans. Wright emphasizes the fact that it was not simply that white settlers usurped their territory and decimated their rank but that this territory was already being occupied by organized, sophisticated, agrarian peoples—not ranging savages standing in the path of civilization. He does this to make clear just how much the New World was founded upon not just the raw terrain but the time-tested developments of the Old: "The Pilgrims thanked their God for saving them in a 'wilderness,' but the feast speaks for itself: turkey, corn, beans, pumpkin, cranberries, potatoes and the rest came from thousands of years of New World civilization. It was the heathen, not the Lord, who saved them."

Wright aligns the spin doctoring and self-deceit that facilitated the extermination of the Indians with like contemporary practices, aligning the rhetoric of Andrew Jackson with Ronald Reagan, or that of William McKinley, who needed to consult directly with God in order to allow him to justify invading the Philip-

pires, with George W Bush. Wright also gives a gracious nod to the work that fellow contemporary writers for laying the groundwork for some of his thesis, such as Jon Krakauer, whose *Under the Banner of Heaven*, a history of violence in Mormonism, is cited in Wright's exploration of the continuous role of fundamentalist religious thinking, not to mention paranoia, in the development of America's march toward self-realization.

**YET WHITE** *What is America?* is impressive, part of *What is America?* is also given over to paying tribute to the countless voices of intelligent dissent that are equally intrinsic to American identity. Besides Krakauer, Wright also draws upon the barbed lamentations of such luminaries as Herman Melville, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Benjamin Franklin, Gore Vidal, Davy Crockett, Henry David Thoreau and Alexis de Tocqueville. And were he to take a gander at some of the other titles sharing the new releases section with *What is America?*, perhaps Wright would go on to include Paul Auster in his list, since *Man in the Dark* (Henry Holt, \$26), Auster's latest novel, is also in a sense a work of American historical revisionism and Auster's most clearly politically charged work since 1992's *Leviathan*.

"I am alone in the dark, turning the world around in my head as I struggle through another bout of insomnia, another white night in the great American wilderness." These are the first words of *Man in the Dark*, which reads as the testimony of a 72-year-old retired book critic named August Brill. The wilderness he writes about is figurative, a vast landscape of relentless shadows, while the literal space he inhabits for the whole of the novel is but the single darkened room where he lies, his leg shattered by an accident, his mind roiling with persistent ghosts: those of his wife, deceased, his son-in-law, separated from his daughter, and his grandson-in-law, killed horrifically on foreign soil. Brill makes up stories to ward off misery, and the one he's working on as *Man in the Dark* begins concerns an America embroiled in a new Civil War, one ignited by the corrupt presidential election of 2000.

Stories within stories are the gleaming mulch of Auster's garden of ideas that deliberately slip away when sifted for singular meanings, but one of the things that I think ennobles *Man in the Dark* in particular is how boldly it exudes a faith in the redemptive power of storytelling, and how it locates the storytelling capacity in not just writers but in every one of us. The novel lights upon a dizzying catalogue of hot-button issues, from the war in Iraq to the erosion of civil liberties, yet it is the confluence of Brill's imaginings with the stories he'll later share with his grieving granddaughter about their family's past that provides Auster with the meatier political statement, one founded in this crazy notion that a democracy really is meant to empower the individual, and that the access to individual dreams, to the inner lives of others, is the gift that novels give to readers to sustain them through troubled times. ▼





# FACE THE NATION

NEW PORTRAITS OF THE WEST BY CONTEMPORARY ABORIGINAL ARTISTS

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JUNE 21-SEPTEMBER 21, 2008

*Dana Claxton, Baby Boy Gotta Indian Horse, 2008. Digital Print. 60 x 48"*

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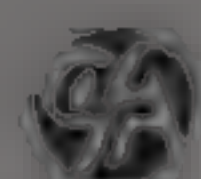
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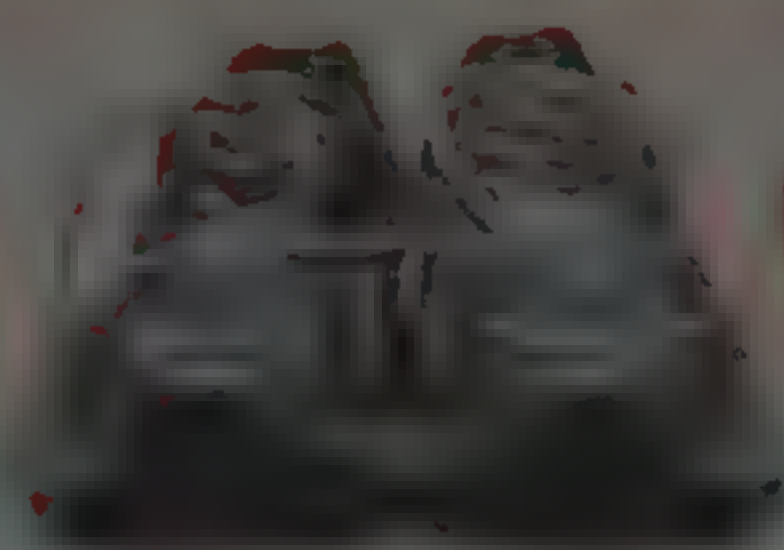


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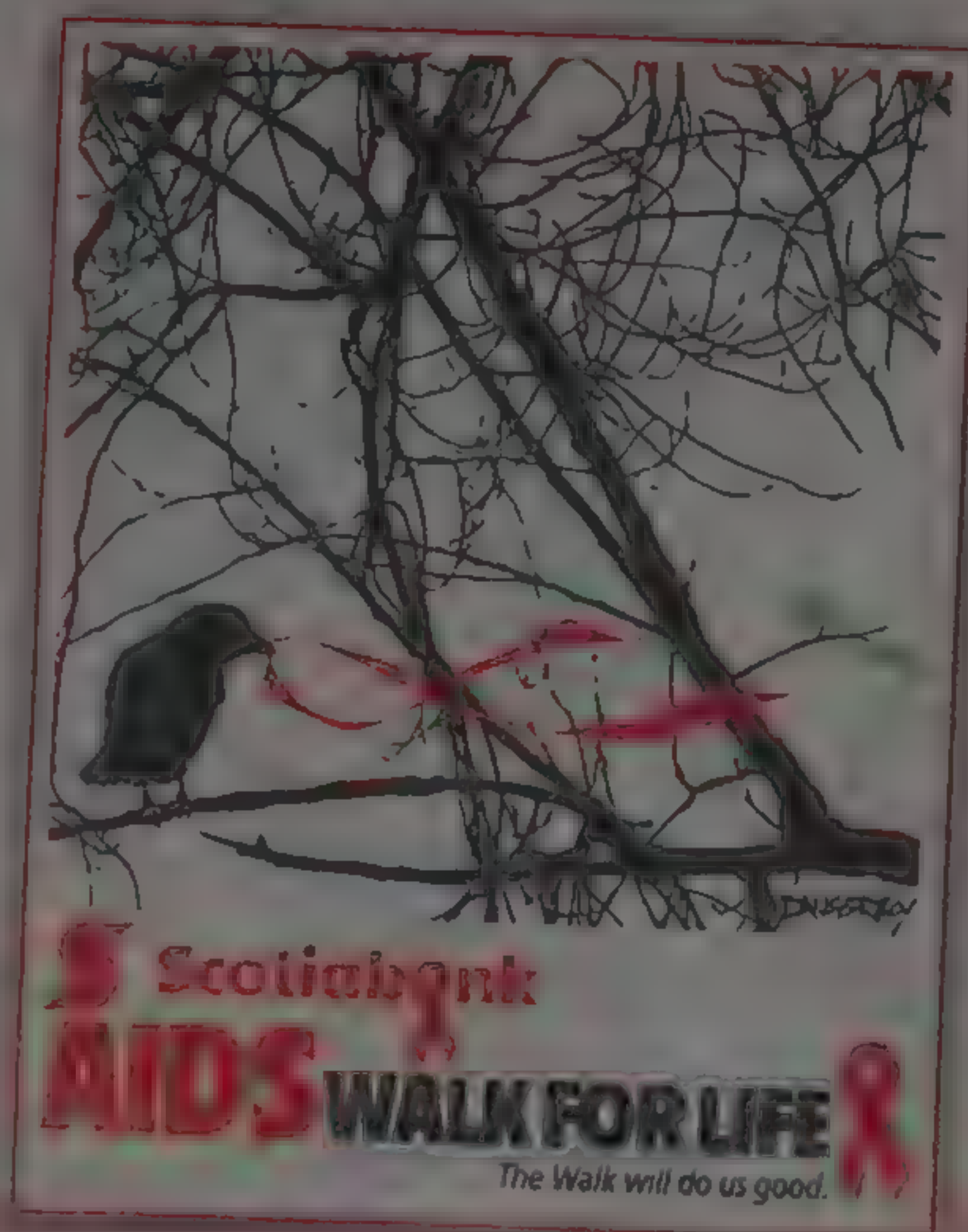
# Why Walk?



		ALBERTA THROWDOWN

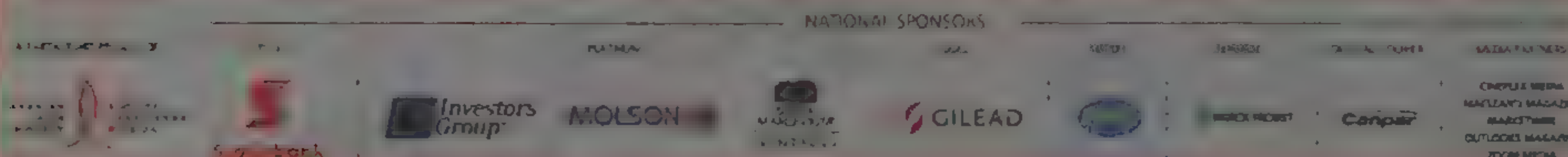
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## Art of Living

Edmonton's artists have to get more involved in the community

DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com

*Editor's note: in an effort to stimulate discussion about the business of art in Edmonton, Vue presented a series of articles on the Edmonton Arts Council's 10-year cultural plan, The Art of Living. This is the last of the series, summing up our take on the plan and the community's response to it. For more information on the plan, you can visit the EAC's website at [edmontonarts.ab.ca](http://edmontonarts.ab.ca).*

EAC | THE ART OF LIVING  
FINAL THOUGHTS

one's living as an artist: the extent of their involvement and knowledge of the political realm, in particular, seems to be limited to writing grant proposals. Obviously, this attitude has to change if Edmonton is going to grow as an artistic community.

No one goes into an artistic pursuit with the goal of sitting on committees and drafting proposals to various levels of government: it is, and should be, about personal expression. Nevertheless, art is not created in a vacuum, and ignoring the circumstances surrounding its creation is only going to make life harder for artists—all artists—in the long run.

As the recent cuts made by the Harper government should remind us, the public funds that support so many of our artistic pursuits are precarious at the best of times. If artists themselves are not willing to stand up and fight for—or at least openly care about—the government support that is often so vital for their work, though, they can hardly complain when funding starts to dry up.

THE ART OF LIVING in and of itself is not perfect. As with any document of this nature, its broad scope is sure to please all of the people only some of the time. One of its most important thrusts, though, is the necessity of getting the art of Edmonton out into the broader community, showing Edmonton the vitality and talent that exists within its own borders.

But such a task is not going to be easy if Edmonton's artists aren't willing to first get involved with their own community. If we are to spend all of our time cooped up in our own studios/rehearsal spaces/offices, it will only be a matter of time before the rest of the world pays as little attention to us as we do to it. Political involvement may be one more thing added to an already difficult life, but if more of us don't take it up, few of us will have to worry about the stresses that come with being a working artist. ▽

Throughout our discussions with Edmonton's arts communities about the EAC's **Art of Living** plan, we consistently ran into a formidable roadblock: few of the artists we tried to talk to had read the actual plan. Considering this is the plan that will set the cultural agenda for Edmonton for the next 10 years, that's disturbing, to say the least.

What it wasn't, unfortunately, was terribly surprising. Though there are, of course, a few prominent and welcome exceptions, Edmonton artists as a whole seem to be greatly uninterested in the practical side of making

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# Dial 'B' for Bullshit

Four things about films that don't deserve their reputations

## DIDACTICISM

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vueweekly.com

There's no teeth-gritting, guile-gurgling disdain quite like the sort that overcomes you when someone who shares your politics expresses those same politics in a shallow, dunder-headed or deeply unpersuasive way. It's one thing to have an idiot speak for your ideological opponent, and something else altogether to have that idiot batting for your team. Especially if that idiot gets a lot of attention.

In the last century, one such idiot, if you'll excuse the personification, has been the movies. Movies can thrill us, stimulate us, challenge us, move us, and yes, even teach us something. But they do so most compellingly when their messages obey the dictates of the fundamental goal: to be art, to be entertainment, hopefully both. When movies decide to focus all their energies on giving us a lesson they nearly always tumble headlong into the arena of bullshit.

Admittedly, there are degrees to which such **didacticism** can spoil a movie. In the case of some Spike Lee movies, like *Bamboozled*, didacticism can be framed so audaciously that it works in spite of itself. In the case of two movies reviewed in this very issue, *Traitor* and *The Edge of Heaven*, the didacticism is annoying, yet the damage is somewhat offset by how heartfelt certain characterizations come across. This goes for dozens of message movies, which habitually draw in good actors seeking to "give something back": folks like Sidney Poitier, Don Chealde, Jimmy Stewart, Jodie Foster or Sean Penn—one actor who really needs to distinguish between a genuinely political movie and a movie that's just about politics. In *Crash*, a movie referenced in my review of *The Edge of Heaven*, didacticism is taken to such obnoxious, facile heights that it becomes a tidal wave of bullshit sweeping everything potentially appealing away—including performances by a truckload of fine, no doubt well-intentioned actors. A bad guy is nice to his incapacitated dad, and we're meant to have a revelation about the complexity of human nature for Christ's sake.

But didacticism is hardly confined to the likes of Stanley Kramer, Paul Haggis or Norman Jewison. The often brilliant Michael Haneke's stupidest movies, both the original German version and recent English-language remake of *Funny Games*, are as dark

## IS FILM INDUSTRY

and nihilistic as his best—the difference being that, provocative and peppered with weird, fitfully interesting details as they are, they have little to ponder other than their titanic moral about the supposed death of affect.

I guess the essential point here is that anyone can pick an issue, take a (usually safe) stance on it, and throw together a story that rams home the message, usually condescending to its audience along the way. It takes a real artist/entertainer to make a movie that lets us figure something out on our own—which is the only way anyone ever really learns anything.

## LARRY KING

OMAR MOUALLEM / omar@vueweekly.com

*Bringing Down the House* has a Rotten Tomato rating of 34 per cent, but if you were perusing Blockbuster's shelves for the perfect romantic comedy about a sassy black woman and an uptight white man, you might leave the store with the DVD in tow, thinking you've made the best decision all weekend. After all, one critic paraded confidently on the cover says it's "One of the funniest movies ever." The same critic called *Home of the Brave* (Rotten Tomato: 24 per cent) "First-rate" and *K-11: The Widowmaker* (Rotten Tomato: 60 per cent) "A masterpiece." Who is this movie-loving movie-quote whore? He happens to be the most recognizable man in media, **Larry King**.

But Larry King is not a movie critic, he's a talk show host—or, at the very least, a caricature. His quotes are not attributed to any TV program, print or radio show, only his name. For all we know, his comments could have been overheard from a bathroom stall.

Last year, King was called on his promiscuous quoting by EW.com when he said about *Breach*, "There isn't a dull moment," even though he was spotted repeatedly taking cell phone calls and exiting the theatre during the screening. Although *Breach* was a very well-received movie, for King, there obviously were dull moments aplenty.

All critics are guilty of overly generous quote-whoring. I once gave *School for Scoundrels* a top rating and

called its maker, "a fantastic character writer." (I still haven't showered enough to cleanse myself of that.) But at least we can be called on it as critics. Larry King is a talk show host who once let Jenny McCarthy co-host *Larry King Live*.

So the next time you're looking for a take-home movie and you see any two quotation marks preceded by a dash and King's name, be weary; it probably means that not a single reputable critic had a positive thing to say, so they resorted to unrecorded comments by a man in suspenders.

## THE QUEEN

BRIAN GIBSON / brian@vueweekly.com

To update the Sex Pistols (with a little help from Obama's ex-pastor), God Damn *The Queen*! Let's hope *The Queen*, inexplicably one of the best-reviewed films of 2006, will soon be forgotten, even though it crowned Helen Mirren at the Oscars.

What was the point of this nicely acted piffle? To make us see that Tony Blair and Her High and Mighty-ness are actually human? But we know that—the problem is that the real Blair and Queen so rarely act human.

Suddenly, from a director who's made gritty, messy dramas at street level (*My Beautiful Laundrette*), came this disappointingly claustrophobic play at sympathy for someone so out of touch with her "subjects." And why blow it up for the big screen? Mirren was far better as a more complicated, compromised boss in both *Elizabeth I* and *Prime Suspect: The Final Chapter*, two TV miniseries that were more visually glorious on the box than *The Queen* was in the cineplex.

And both those shows offered a more multi-storied cross-section of England than Stephen Frears' film, whose best moments are its footage of the public mourning Diana in the streets. But that stunning mass reaction is left as backdrop. Instead the film dwells on aloof Elizabeth II and her misreading of that public, her Wordsworth-ian encounter with a stag on her massive Highlands estate, and her oh-so-sad imprisonment by her role.

But it's a fate devoid of tragedy—she's been simply, unluckily born into her life, but so are we all, for better or worse. She's no more alone than millions who don't have her millions. Where's the arc? The tragic flaw? The ebbs and flows to her character? If *The Queen* had found its true ancestral

home—on PBS' *Masterpiece Theatre*—she would have been, rightly, seen as a middle-of-the-pack chamber drama.

## THE RAZZIES

JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vueweekly.com

I'm choosing to cut down the out-of-date insensitivity of the **Golden Razzie** awards, most eloquently demonstrated by the sweep of statues by *I Know Who Killed Me*, a unique effort by director Chris Sivertson and Lindsay Lohan made infamous by the unfortunate timing of its starlet's relapse into alcoholism. I'm more often one to indulge in glitzy train wreck moments of Hollywood's leading ladies, but such occurred in accordance with a rather interesting film that daringly suspended restrictively normalized notions of quality to experiment with genre and performance.

In the film, Lohan stars as Aubrey, a suburban teen survivor of a violent kidnapping—or so we are to believe, as she actually claims to be Dakota, skid row stripper from a completely different family than the ones who take her home after the incident. *I Know Who Killed Me* borrows elements of Brian de Palma's early pervy Hitchcockian work like *Sisters* and *Dressed to Kill*, thwarting the narrative into often unseen directions that both aggravate and entice the viewer. The irregularity of Lohan's performance is more than a step into self-parody, as she allows an awkward script to portray her as a sensual, dramatic force within a film that very much knows it is a film. So often, a film must either bear the tiring illusion of realism or a blatant indie-style reflexivity of "breaking the fourth wall" that there is no room for forms of creativity that inspire curious, inexplicable feelings.

In that sense, one-joke institutions like the Golden Razzies gather together a number of misunderstood works to "celebrate" a year of bad cinema. This year *I Know Who Killed Me* won eight of the nine awards it was nominated for, including "Worst Remake or Rip-off," with the organizers citing *Hostel*, *Saw*, and *The Patty Duke Show* as its sources, a juvenile cut-down less funny than *Killed Me*'s biggest competitor, *Norbit*. Since then, I've left several parties drunk and angry that nobody would buy my recommendation of *I Know Who Killed Me* as valid—an imaginably similar experience to that of abstractly minded critics when *Mommie Dearest* won Worst Picture in 1982. ♥



# String theory

*Edge of Heaven* tries too hard to remind us we're all connected

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vuwweekly.com

At the start of two of its three chapters, Fatih Akin's *The Edge of Heaven* (*Auf der anderen Seite*) does a couple of very curious things, each highly emblematic of the movie's underlying spirit. Firstly, with, happily, no "spoiler alert" warning anywhere in sight, the chapters in question are titled so as to unambiguously announce the climactic death of a central character. Secondly, they depict the arrival by plane of a coffin from another land. In one coffin lies the remains of a Turk killed in Germany, in the other a German killed in Turkey. As the stories of the coffin's contents are revealed, this morbid foreign exchange program proves to be riddled with potent themes of dislocation and misunderstanding, intolerance and inter-generational breakdown.

There is certainly no mistaking the ambitions toward profundity and timelessness invested here. Neither can one say that intense emotions have not been shaken to life to make it all happen. Yet as I watched *The Edge of Heaven* I could never quite shake off the sense that no single pursuit was

being served so arduously as that of what is finally kind of a cheap and, these days, over-extended device: dramatic irony, that indispensable tool for many an ostensibly important, dramaturgically overcooked movie of our new century. From *Crash* to *Babel*, our most literal-minded liberal filmmakers have been trying to show us how, in the age of globalization, everything is connected, and they convey this by, well, literally connecting everybody in their movies, as though the audience is entirely incapable of making such connections on their own. Akin's latest isn't quite as overbearing in its approach as the above high-profile examples, as he endows certain scenes with a genuinely affecting level of intimacy. But it's this very intimacy that instills our viewing experience with that much deeper a sense of betrayal once the writer/director's heavy hand enters the frame.

**IN ONE STRAND** of *The Edge of Heaven* we see Ali (Tuncel Kurtiz), a retired widower, fall in serious-like with Yeter (Nursel Köse), a spunky 40ish prostitute. Both are Turks living in Germany,

FOREIGN

OPENS FRI, AUG 29

## THE EDGE OF HEAVEN

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY FATIH AKIN  
STARRING BAKI DAVRAK, NURGÜL YESİLCAY,  
PATRYCIA ZIOLKOWSKA, HANNA SCHYGULLA

\*\*\*

their common national heritage filling in a few of the gaps in their very different backgrounds and sensibilities. Ali convinces Yeter to quit the racket and come live with him as a kept woman he can screw whenever the wind's in his sails. She's got a daughter back home to support. She surely doesn't get off on hooking and probably wouldn't mind escaping the muttered threats of the neighbourhood fundamentalist Muslims who broodingly disapprove of the work. So she agrees. But things, as they will, get more complicated

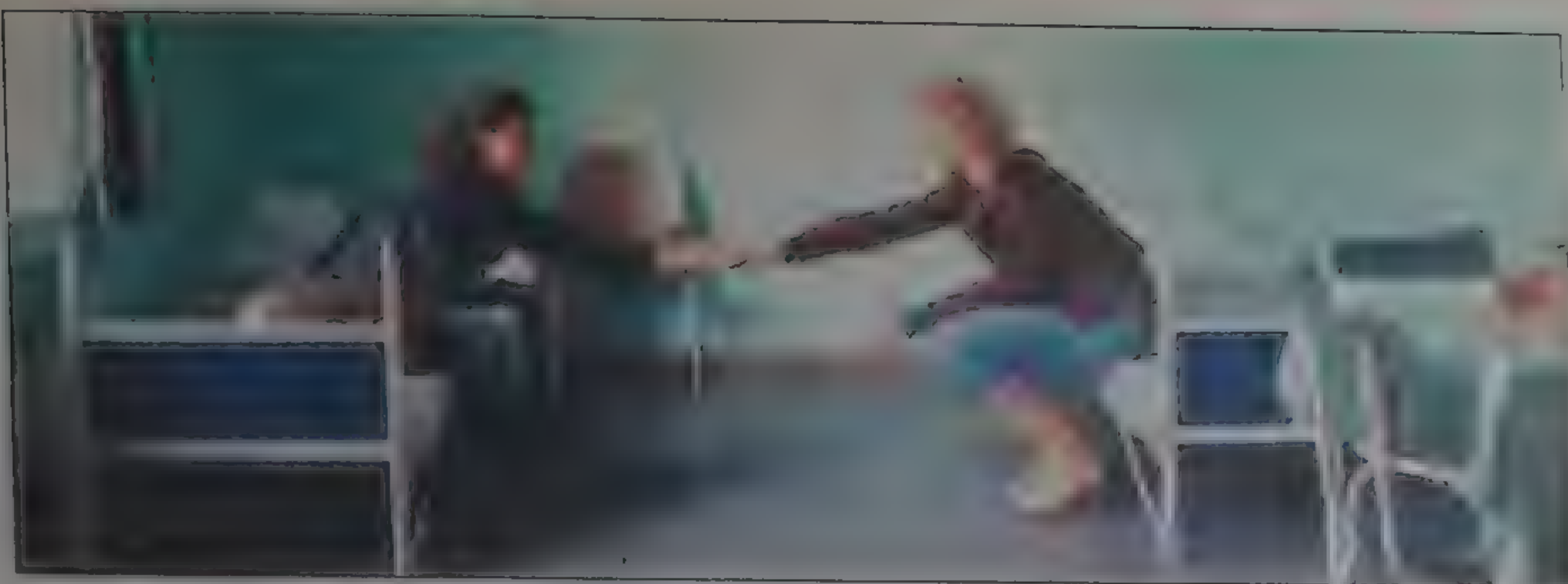
In another strand Yeter's daughter Ayten (Nurgül Yesilçay), a young, aggressive political activist, flees

Turkey, hoping to find her mom in Germany. She finds instead Lotte (Patrycia Ziolkowska), a student who becomes smitten by this rough-edged foundling and takes her in—even if Lotte's mom Susanne (Fassbinder veteran Hanna Schygulla) isn't all that cool with the interracial panty party going on under her roof. Yet Susanne's wishes for Ayten's expulsion come alarmingly true once Ayten's sent back to Turkey and imprisoned, followed by lovestruck and hell-bent-on-justice Lotte

The third chapter wrangles both threads together, thanks in part to the very handy link of Nejat (Baki Davrak), Ali's son, who over the course of the film gives up his academic career in Germany to rediscover his ethnic roots, taking over a German bookstore in Istanbul. *The Edge of Heaven* slips in these shots here and there to provide a few big a-ha! moments of missed opportunity, before finally

building up to the climax, where solace is to be found in the knowledge that, in the end, tragedies at least have some meaning once their trajectories are unearthed

But in the search for solace, here too, Akin, for my taste at least, tries a little too hard than is strictly necessary to generate catharsis with scenes of prolonged, agonized weeping one might characterize as the pomography of the middlebrow moviegoer. There's a point where emoting transcends empathy and becomes simply alienating, and Akin crosses it and some I know of course that some people really go for that stuff, which may go some way to explain the film's avalanche of awards. But such accolades may also partly result from a collective desire to see a dream come to life, one where even the most oppositional hostile forces might unite into a patchwork brotherhood, a united Europe founded as is often the case, in bloodshed. ▽



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**STARTS FRIDAY!** CHECK THEATRE DIRECTORY FOR SHOWTIMES  
DIGITAL SOUND

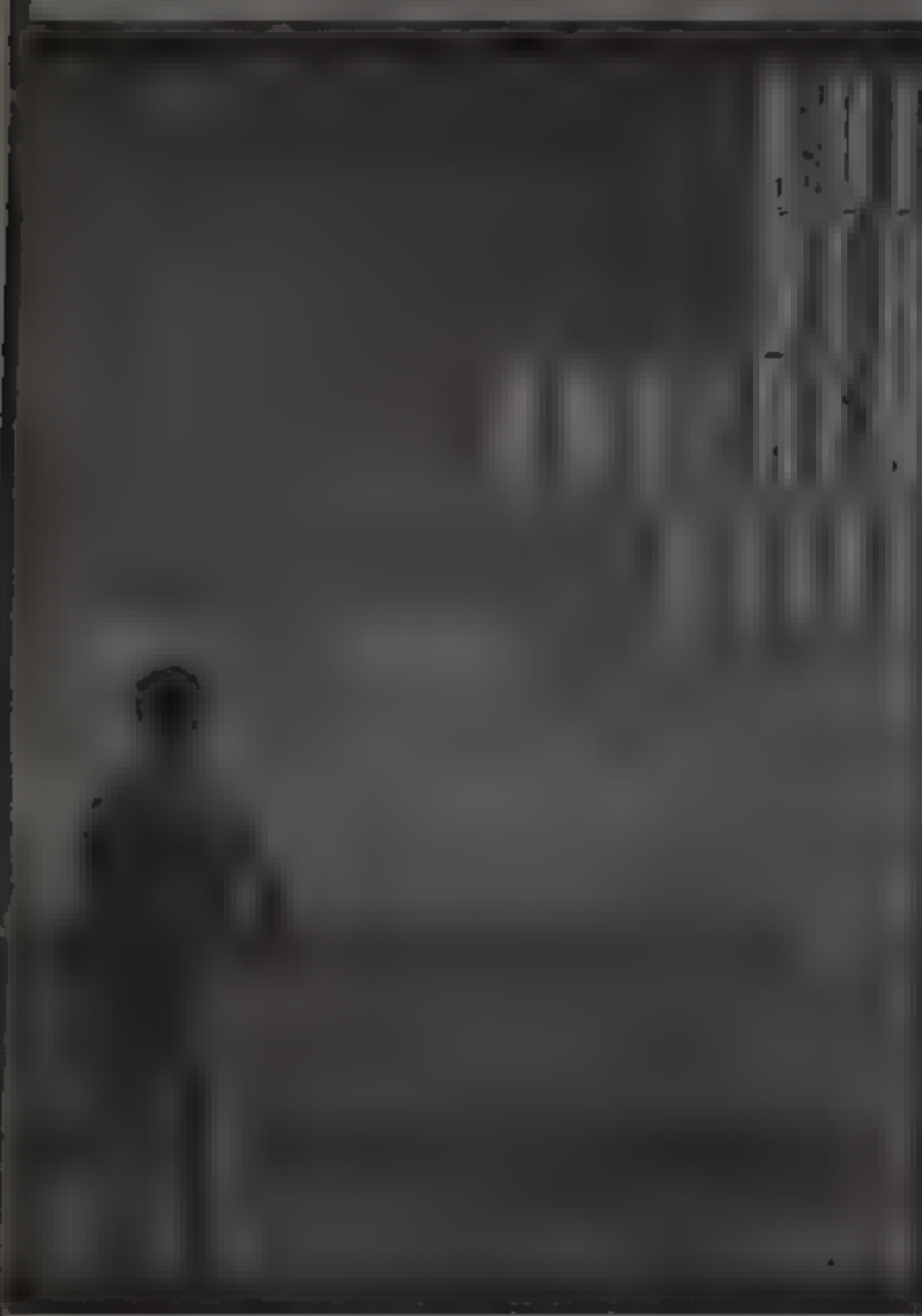
**DISASTER MOVIE**

14

CINEPLEX ENTERTAINMENT SOUTH EDMONTON COMMON	CINEPLEX ENTERTAINMENT SCOTIABANK THEATRE	EMPIRE THEATRES CLAREVIEW 10	EMPIRE THEATRES WESTMOUNT CENTRE	CINEPLEX ENTERTAINMENT GALAXY 10 SHEPPARD AVE. E.
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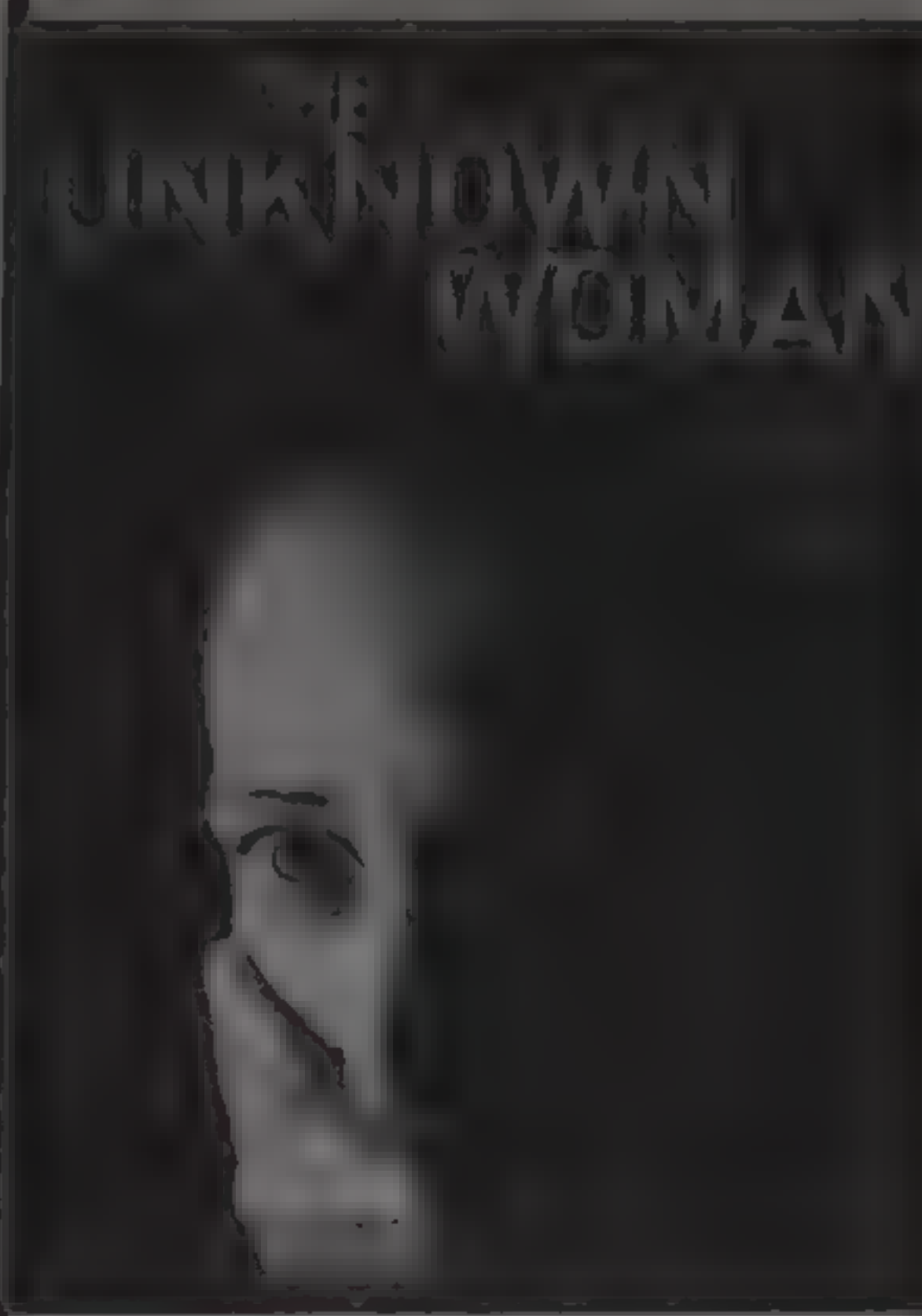


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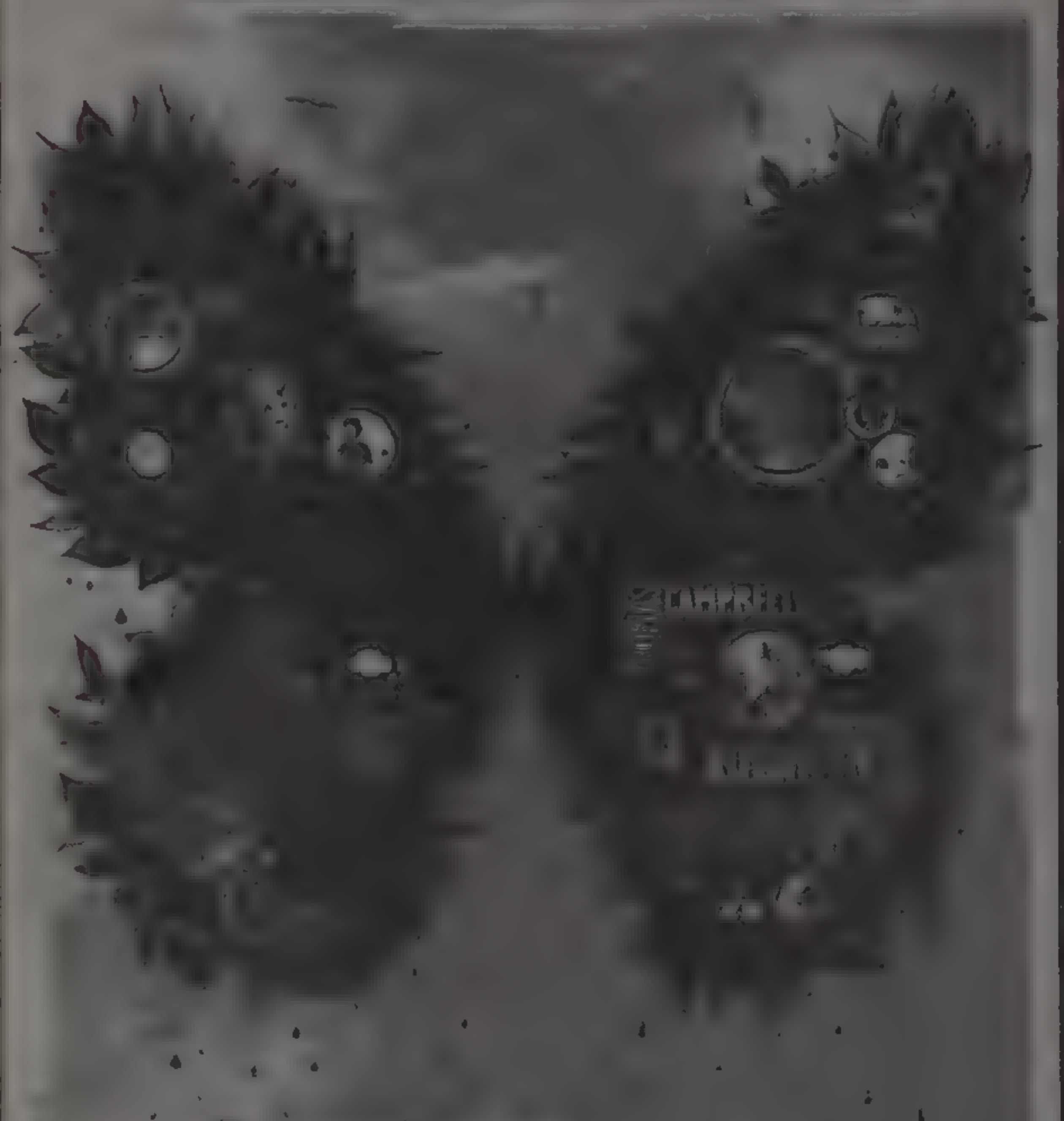
**PRINCESS**  
THEATRE  
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**THE UNKNOWN WOMAN**  
NIGHTLY @ 6:50 & 9:10 PM  
SAT, SUN & MON MATINEES @ 2:30 PM  
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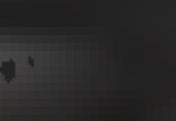
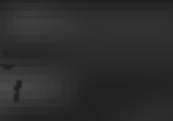
**BEAUTIFUL LOSERS**  
SCREENING OCTOBER 11-15



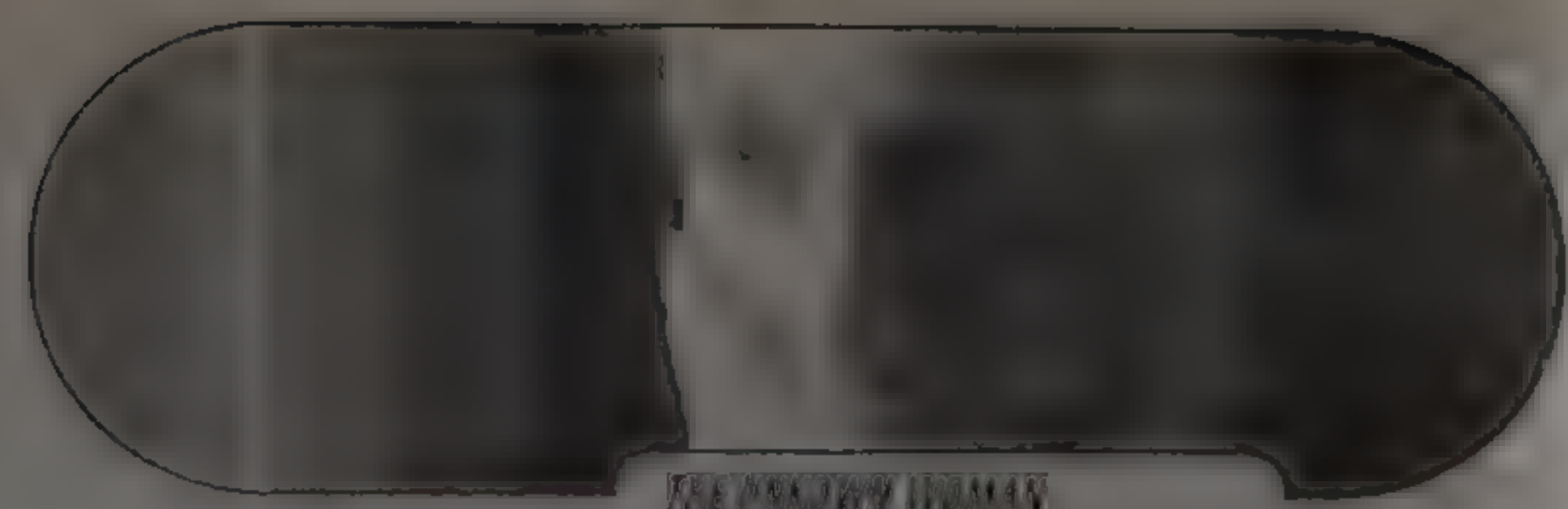
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# QUICK REVIEWS FILM CAPSULES



## OPENING THIS WEEK

**OIL ON WATER**  
DIRECTED BY PETER MATTHEWS  
SCREENPLAY BY ALLE MATTHEWS  
STARRING BIANCA LISHANSKY, ST JOHN ALEXANDER  
SAT, AUG 30 - SUN, AUG 31 (7 PM)  
RATED 18A SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
★

JONATHAN BUSCH / [jonathan@vuwweekly.com](mailto:jonathan@vuwweekly.com)  
We're all sensitive to other people's serious medical issues when we see them on screen, as is evident by the episode of *Degrassi Junior High* when Caitlin has an epileptic seizure at a slumber party. But a film's navel-gazing can really run itself into the ground, and *Oil on Water*, the story of a young female writer caught in a relationship with a paranoid schizophrenic artist, does more than smiling at its own belly button—it faces its reflection in the bathroom mirror and french-kisses it. What starts as a modest love story about art and mental illness turns into a dreadful fantasy wank about what it might be like to paint naked women in a seaside home and hear voices in one's head, a weaker choice of cinema the contemporary viewer might find to inform themselves of schizophrenia.

After a quiet afternoon posing nude, Anna (Bianca Lishansky) reflects on how she met the man of her dreams Max (St John Alexander), a thoughtful, brooding painter who, after meeting Anna at a group drawing session, asks her to become his muse. Soon enough, they're sharing their creative hopes and dreams with each other, herself being a confused journalist and him being withdrawn and misunderstood by friends and family. But in their creative woes, they find a common ground and move in together, despite Anna's consistent worries that it might not work out. More and more, Max starts to appear tormented by something outside of Anna's control, something which his brothers and temptress neighbor Natalie (Nadia Geyser) raise their eyebrows at. But Anna tells them that Max is merely stressed and working too hard, though she suspects if she does not intervene soon, there may be consequences.

*Oil on Water* visually shares both the symptoms of Max's schizophrenia and its emotional impact on Anna through a variety of illustrious settings: while she ponders the errors of her ways on a sunset-lit balcony, he tries to block haunting whispers and grotesque hallucinations in his studio or at the floor of their swimming pool. Anna's narration guides most of the film, endlessly sharing earnest yet insipid observations on love and death, all the while backgrounded by a series of cheap sounding pop vocals. The film is so obsessed with providing the most majestic and luxurious scenery that it feels like an advertisement for tampons or antidepressants more than a compassionate dramatization of its apparent in-depth research of the condition. It's not a far cry to report that some viewers might find *Oil on Water* a frustrating and offensive soap opera, and would rather find a less patronizing documentary on the subject.

**TRAITOR**  
DIRECTED BY JEFFREY NACHMANOFF  
WRITTEN BY NACHMANOFF, STEVE MARTIN  
STARRING DON CHEADLE, GUY PEARCE, SAÏD TAGHMAOUI  
★★★

JOSEF BRAUN / [josef@vuwweekly.com](mailto:josef@vuwweekly.com)  
The brief prelude is set in Sudan, 1978, and conveys an essential bit of exposition: a child witnesses his father get blown to bits in a car bombing. As the camera holds on the child's shocked face we transit to present-day Yemen, where

the story proper begins and that child is now a man named Samir Horn (co-producer Don Cheadle) who, in a bold bit of dramatic irony, is now selling explosives to Islamic terrorists. What's interesting in this is that Samir's childhood trauma is actually mentioned in later scenes, which calls into question whether or not we needed to actually see the event, arguably one more spectacular and emotionally fraught moment in a movie stuffed with them. But like a lot of thrillers, *Traitor* is very much about seeming, the sort of film in which what we see and what we're told demand to be distinguished, both for the sake of tension and to deepen our understanding of its message, because, make no mistake, *Traitor* is also very much a message-laden film.

The term "didactic" is almost always used as a pejorative, and needn't always be the case. Like *Hotel Rwanda*, another film that found Cheadle portraying an African-born protagonist in a desperate, topical situation, *Traitor*, helmed by Jeffrey Nachmanoff, is decidedly mainstream, its approach to storytelling and directorial style being well-crafted boilerplate. But it's also the sort of film, like *Hotel Rwanda*, that wouldn't mean much if it didn't have the capacity to reach the largest possible audience. Based on a story by Steve Martin—yep, that Steve Martin—it's told largely from the perspective of Samir, a devout Muslim with extensive military experience and expertise in explosives, who gradually joins up with Islamic terrorists. He's not the first terrorist to be ostensibly empathized in movies, but he is the most identifiable, embodied in a beloved, charismatic Hollywood actor.

Samir has a parallel character in G-man Roy Clayton (Guy Pearce), a noble Southerner whose daddy was a minister, who majored in Islamic studies and who can quote the Koran at the drop of a hat. More capable than his fellow feds because of his understanding of the enemy, he's at once Samir's nemesis and ally. He's also crucial to ramming home *Traitor's* appeals for greater tolerance in times of crisis, with dialogue about how ineffective racial profiling is or overwrought lines like "Seems every religion has more than one face." Clayton's role as explicator for fundamentalist Islam's seeming psychopathology is compromised by the fact that Samir, through no fault of the superb

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Cheadle, of whom we can only blame for being so likable, never fully convinces as a man who truly believes that the slaughter of innocent people—okay, “infidels”—is an admirable way to advance the cause of his people. But *Traitor*, as sly in certain respects as it is unsubtle, finds its ways of dealing with this problem, and by the time we become distracted by such contradictions, Nachmanoff is shifting into high-gear genre dynamics, stacking up reversals and building suspense sufficiently to keep us engaged. In any case it held my interest long enough for me to appreciate its particular ideological stance, even while it's getting shoved down my throat.

## THE UNKNOWN WOMAN

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY GUISEPPE TORNATORE  
STARRING KSENIA RAPPAPORT, MICHELE PLACIDO  
★★★★

JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vuweekly.com  
in his first film since 2000's *Malena*, Oscar-winning director Guiseppe Tornatore (*Cinema Paradiso*) pulls a much darker stunt in his exploration of the psyche of a harshly wronged Ukrainian woman hiding out as a housekeeper for a respected Italian jeweler family. The influence of recent French thrillers is apparent in Tornatore's film, which is unsettling but equally compassionate in the literal formation of an identity for its title character through the noirish progression of its story.

*The Unknown Woman* opens in a scene that American audiences might very well liken to the risqué orgy sequence in Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*—a row of women in masks and skimpy lingerie stand before the viewer, as a voice commands each of them away except for one, whom is then forced to undress, pardon the mask. It initially abstracts, yet appropriately introduces the character of Irena (Ksenia Rappaport), whom shortly into the film is revealed as a woman with a troubled and complicated past, obscured in the film by a time-shattered method of storytelling. Upon her present-tense arrival in a provincial northern Italian city, this said past is revealed piece by piece through memories triggered by varied fleeting sensations that Irena encounters in her mysterious pursuit of employment by a particular family.

But each answer regarding Irena's motivations provide other shadows to be cast over what we thought we understood—part of the intensity of *The Unknown Woman* is the constant jerking in different emotional directions. Irena meets Thea (Clara Dossena, quite the trooper), the young girl she is hired to care for, and with whom she soon earns a bond kept quiet from her parents. But after Thea gets abused by her schoolmates, Irena quickly attempts to teach her to defend herself through harsh and violent methods Scarlett Johansson wouldn't dare have tried in *The Nanny Diaries*.

It's a difficult plot to address without completely spoiling its rewarding secrets, and it's not worth diminishing the effect of Tornatore's sly and effortless filmmaking. Legendary composer Ennio Morricone scores Irena's emotional journey, while the cinematography of Fabio Zamboni (*Respiro*) frames several scenes with a startling sinisterness. What's most grip-

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

# FILM WEEKLY

FRI AUGUST 29-THU SEPTEMBER 4

6034 Connaught Dr. Jaxson, 760-852-4749

**TRUOPIC THUNDER** (14A, coarse language, crude content) Fri-Sun 1:30; Daily 7:00, 9:05

**THE MUMMY: TOMB OF THE DRAGON EMPEROR** (PG, frightening scenes, violence) Fri-Sun 1:30; Daily 7:00, 9:05

**CINEMA CITY MOVIES 12**  
120 Ave 50 St. 760-472-9779

**BRIDESHEAD REVISITED** (PG, sexual content, mature themes) Fri-Sat 9:20 12:05; Sun-Thu 9:20

**SPACE CHIMPS** (G) Fri-Thu 1:05 3:05 5:05 7:10

**HELLBOY II: THE GOLDEN ARMY** (14A) Fri-Sat 1:40 4:25 7:20 9:55 12:20; Sun-Thu 1:40 4:25 7:20 9:55

**WANTED** (18A, gory scenes, brutal violence) Fri-Sat 1:35 4:10 7:05 9:45 12:10; Sun-Thu 1:35 4:10 7:05 9:45

**THE LOVE GURU** (14A, crude content) Fri-Thu 1:55 7:25

**THE HAPPENING** (14A, gory scenes) Fri-Thu 4:45 9:30

**THE INCREDIBLE HULK** (PG, violence, frightening scenes) Fri-Sat 1:45 4:35 7:15 10:05 12:20; Sun-Thu 1:45 4:35 7:15 10:05

**YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN** (14A, sexual content) Fri-Sat 4:40 10:00 12:15; Sun-Thu 4:40 10:00

**KUNG FU PANDA** (PG) Fri-Sat 1:20 2:00 4:00 4:30 7:00 9:10 11:25; Sun-Thu 1:20 2:00 4:00 4:30 7:00 9:10

**SEX AND THE CITY** (18A) Fri-Thu 3:50 6:50 9:40

**INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL** (PG, violence, frightening scenes) Fri-Sat 1:30 4:20 6:30 7:10 9:15 9:50 12:00; Sun-Thu 1:30 4:20 6:30 7:10 9:15 9:50

**THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN** (PG, violence) Fri-Sat 1:15 4:40 7:35 10:45; Sun-Thu 1:15 4:40 7:35

**WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS** (PG, not rec. for children, coarse language) Fri-Sat 1:50 6:55 11:35; Sun-Thu 1:50 6:55

**IRON MAN** (PG, not rec. for young children, violence) Fri-Sat 1:25 4:15 7:00 9:50 12:15; Sun-Thu 1:25 4:15 7:00 9:50

**DR. SEUSS' HORTON HEARS A WHO!** (G) Fri-Thu 1:35

**CINEPLEX ODEON NORTH**  
14231 137th Avenue, 780-732-2235

**BABYLON A.D.** (14A, violence) no passes Fri-Thu 1:45 4:40 7:20 10:00

**COLLEGE** (18A, crude content, coarse language) Fri-Thu 1:50 5:20 7:45 10:35

**TRAITOR** (14A, violence) Fri-Thu 1:00 4:00 6:40 9:10

**DEATH RACE** (14A, gory scenes, coarse language, brutal violence) no passes Fri 2:00 5:15 8:00 10:40; Sat-Thu 2:00 5:15 8:00 10:40

**THE HOUSE BUNNY** (PG, not rec. for young children, coarse language) Fri-Thu 1:10 4:10 6:50 9:20

**HAMLET 2** (14A, coarse language) Fri-Thu 4:30 7:10 9:30

**HAMLET 2** (14A, coarse language) Fri-Thu 4:30 7:10 9:30

**THE ROCKER** (PG, coarse language) Fri-Thu 12:30

**STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS** (PG) Fri-Thu 12:20 2:40 5:00 7:30

**MIRRORS** (18A, gory scenes) Fri-Thu 10:25

**TROPIC THUNDER** (14A, coarse language, crude content) Fri-Thu 1:20 4:20 7:20 10:30

**THE SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS 2** (PG) Fri-Thu 12:40

**PINEAPPLE EXPRESS** (18A, substance abuse) Fri-Thu 12:50 3:40 6:30 9:00

**THE MUMMY: TOMB OF THE DRAGON EMPEROR** (PG, frightening scenes, violence) Fri-Thu 7:05 9:50

**STEP BROTHERS** (14A, coarse language, not rec. for children, crude content) Fri-Thu 2:50 5:10 7:35 10:10

**THE DARK KNIGHT** (PG, frightening scenes, not rec. for young children, violence) Fri-Thu 12:10 3:30 7:00 10:15

**MAMMA MIA!** (PG) Fri-Thu 12:50 3:40 6:30 9:00

**JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH** (PG, not rec. for young children) Fri-Thu 1:40 4:15 7:15 9:40

**WALL-E** (G) Fri-Thu 12:00

**CINEPLEX ODEON SOUTH**  
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**BABYLON A.D.** (14A, violence) no passes Fri-Thu 12:50 3:40 6:40 9:20

**COLLEGE** (18A, crude content, coarse language) Fri-Thu 2:10 4:50 7:45 10:15

**TRAITOR** (14A, violence) Fri-Thu 2:00 4:40 7:40 10:30

**DISASTER MOVIE** (14A, crude content) Fri-Thu 1:00 4:20 7:20 9:50

**MAMMA MIA! SING-A-LONG** (No Rating) Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 1:10 4:10 7:15 9:40; Tue 4:10 7:15 9:40

**MAMMA MIA! SING-A-LONG** (No Rating) Star and Strollers screening Tue 1:00

**DEATH RACE** (14A, gory scenes, coarse language, brutal violence) no passes Fri 1:15 3:45 6:45 9:15; Sat-Thu 1:15 3:50 6:45 9:15

**THE HOUSE BUNNY** (PG, not rec. for young children, coarse language) Fri-Thu 1:50 4:15 7:30 9:50

**THE LONGSHOTS** (PG) Fri-Thu 12:20

**THE ROCKER** (PG, coarse language) Fri-Thu 4:40

**STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS** (PG) Fri-Thu 1:45 4:30 7:10 9:30

**MIRRORS** (18A, gory scenes) Fri-Thu 7:30 10:20

**TROPIC THUNDER** (14A, coarse language, crude content) Fri-Thu 1:20 4:00 7:00 9:45

**THE SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS 2** (PG) Fri-Thu 3:10 6:40 9:15

**PINEAPPLE EXPRESS** (18A, substance abuse) Fri-Thu 12:30 3:00 6:30 9:10

**THE MUMMY: TOMB OF THE DRAGON EMPEROR** (PG, frightening scenes, violence) Fri-Thu 12:45 3:20 6:20 9:00

**STEP BROTHERS** (14A, coarse language, not rec. for children, crude content) Fri-Thu 12:40 3:15 7:30 10:10

**THE DARK KNIGHT** (PG, frightening scenes, not rec. for young children, violence) Fri-Thu 12:15 3:30 6:50 10:00

**JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH** (PG, not rec. for young children) REALD Fri-Thu 1:30 3:45 6:45 9:15

**WALL-E** (G) Fri-Thu 1:40

**CINEPLEX WEST MALL 8**  
6892-170 St. 780-444-1829

**LAKH PARDESI HOIYEY (PUNJABI WEST)** (PG) Fri-Thu 1:30 4:30 7:30 10:30

**SPACE CHIMPS** (G) Fri-Thu 1:05 3:05 5:05 7:10

**THE LOVE GURU** (14A, crude content) Fri 4:25 7:00 9:45; Sat-Mon 1:35 4:25 7:00 9:45; Tue-Thu 7:00 9:45

**THE INCREDIBLE HULK** (PG, violence, frightening scenes) Fri 4:20 6:45 9:10; Sat-Mon 1:20 4:20 6:45 9:10; Tue-Thu 6:45 9:10

**KUNG FU PANDA** (PG) Fri-Sat 1:20 2:00 4:00 4:30 7:00 9:10 11:25; Sun-Thu 1:20 2:00 4:00 4:30 7:00 9:10

**SEX AND THE CITY** (18A) Fri-Thu 3:50 6:50 9:40

**INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL** (PG, violence, frightening scenes) Fri-Sat 1:30 4:20 6:30 7:10 9:15 9:50 12:00; Sun-Thu 1:30 4:20 6:30 7:10 9:15 9:50

violence, frightening scenes) Fri 4:10 6:50 9:40; Sat-Mon 1:30 4:10 6:50 9:40; Tue-Thu 6:50 9:40

**THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN** (PG, violence) Fri-Thu 1:30 4:10 6:50 9:40; Sat-Mon 1:45 4:40 7:20 9:50; Tue-Thu 6:50 9:40

**IRON MAN** (PG, not rec. for young children, violence) Fri 4:40 7:20 9:50; Sat-Mon 1:45 4:40 7:20 9:50; Tue-Thu 6:50 9:40

**CITY CENTRE 9**  
162 Ave. 780-421-0000

**COLLEGE** (18A, crude content, coarse language) Fri-Thu 12:50 3:50 7:10 9:40

**BABYLON A.D.** (14A, violence) Fri-Thu 12:15 3:35 6:40 9:00

**PINEAPPLE EXPRESS** (18A, substance abuse) Fri-Thu 1:00 4:10 6:50 9:10

**TROPIC THUNDER** (14A, coarse language, crude content) Fri-Thu 12:30 3:40 7:15 9:50

**THE HOUSE BUNNY** (PG, not rec. for young children, coarse language) Fri-Thu 12:40 4:00 7:20 9:25

**HAMLET 2** (14A, coarse language) Fri-Thu 1:10 4:15 7:30 9:45

**THE ROCKER** (PG, coarse language) Fri-Thu 12:10

**THE DARK KNIGHT** (PG, violence, frightening scenes, not rec. for young children) Fri-Thu 3:00 6:30 9:30

**TRAITOR** (14A, violence) Fri-Thu 12:00 2:20 4:40 7:25 9:55

**DEATH RACE** (14A, gory scenes, coarse language, brutal violence) Fri-Thu 12:30 3:10 7:00 9:20

**CLASHVIEW 10**  
4211-139 Ave. 780-472-7600

**THE DARK KNIGHT** (PG, violence, frightening scenes, not rec. for young children) Fri-Thu 4:30 8:00

**PINEAPPLE EXPRESS** (18A, substance abuse) Fri-Mon 1:00 7:05 9:35; Tue-Thu 7:05 9:35

**TROPIC THUNDER** (14A, coarse language, crude content) Fri-Mon 1:10 3:50 6:45 9:20; Tue-Thu 3:50 6:45 9:20

**STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS** (PG) Fri-Mon 12:50

**THE ROCKER** (PG, coarse language) Fri-Thu 4:15

**THE HOUSE BUNNY** (PG, not rec. for young children, coarse language) Fri-Mon 1:20 4:20 6:40 9:00; Tue-Thu 4:20 6:40 9:00

**DEATH RACE** (14A, gory scenes, coarse language, brutal violence) Fri-Mon 1:40 4:10 7:20 9:45; Tue-Thu 4:10 7:20 9:45

**HAMLET 2** (14A, coarse language) Fri-Mon 2:10 4:45 7:30 9:55; Tue-Thu 4:45 7:30 9:55

**BABYLON A.D.** (14A, violence) Fri-Mon 1:50 4:50 7:10 9:30; Tue-Thu 4:50 7:10 9:30

**DISASTER MOVIE** (14A, crude content) DIGITAL PRESENTATION Fri-Mon 2:00 4:25 7:25 9:40; Tue-Thu 4:25 7:25 9:40

**COLLEGE** (18A, crude content, coarse language) Fri-Mon 1:25 4:40 7:00 9:50; Tue-Thu 4:40 7:00 9:50

**TRAITOR** (14A, violence) Fri-Mon 1:30 4:00 6:50 9:10; Tue-Thu 4:00 6:50 9:10

**GALAXY SHEPHERD PARK**  
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**BABYLON A.D.** (14A, violence) no passes Fri-Mon 12:10 2:30 4:40 7:30 10:00; Tue-Thu 7:30 10:00

**COLLEGE** (18A, crude content, coarse language) Fri-Mon 12:55, 3:20, Daily 6:55, 9:20

**DISASTER MOVIE** (14A, crude content) Fri-Mon 12:20 2:40 4:50 7:40 10:30

**DEATH RACE** (14A, gory scenes, coarse language, brutal violence) no passes Fri 1:30 4:30 7:20 10:10; Sat-Mon 1:30 4:30 7:20 10:10; Tue-Thu 6:50 9:40

**THE HOUSE BUNNY** (PG, not rec. for

young children, coarse language) Fri-Mon 1:00 4:15 7:10 9:50; Tue-Thu 7:10 9:50

**STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS** (PG) Fri-Mon 4:00 7:05 9:30; Tue-Thu 7:05 9:30

**TROPIC THUNDER** (14A, coarse language, crude content) Fri-Mon 1:10 4:10 7:15 9:45; Tue-Thu 7:15 9:45

**THE SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS 2** (PG) Fri-Mon 12:40

**PINEAPPLE EXPRESS** (18A, substance abuse) Fri-Thu 9:40

**STEP BROTHERS** (14A, coarse language, not rec. for children, crude content) Fri-Mon 12:50 3:45 6:45; Tue-Thu 6:45

**THE DARK KNIGHT** (PG, frightening scenes, not rec. for young children, violence) Fri-Mon 12:00 3:30 6:50 10:10; Tue-Thu 6:50 10:10

**MAMMA MIA!** (PG) Fri-Mon 12:30 3:50 6:40 9:20; Tue-Thu 6:40 9:20

**GARREAU**  
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**VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA** (14A) Daily 7:00, 9:00; Sat-Mon 2:00

**GRANDIN THEATRE**  
Grandin Mall, Sir Winston Churchill, 780-451-0000

**TROPIC THUNDER** (14A, coarse language, crude content) Daily 1:10, 3:15, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35

**PINEAPPLE EXPRESS** (18A, substance abuse) Daily 5:20, 9:30

**MAMMA MIA!** (PG) Daily 1:05, 3:20, 7:25

**DISASTER MOVIE** (14A, crude content) Daily 1:15, 3:10, 5:30, 7:00, 8:55

**HOUSE BUNNY** (PG, not rec. for young children, coarse language) Daily 12:40, 2:25, 4:10, 6:00, 7:50, 9:40

**STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS** (PG) Daily 1:00, 3:00, 6:45

**THE ROCKER** (PG, coarse language) No passes Daily 4:50, 8:45

**DUGGAN CINEMA-CAMPORE**  
1010 St. 780-451-0000

**THE HOUSE BUNNY** (PG, coarse language, not recommended for young children) Daily 7:20, 9:15; Sat, Sun, Tue, Thu 2:20

**TROPIC THUNDER** (14A, coarse language, crude content) Daily 7:10, 9:20; Sat, Sun, Tue, Thu 2:10

**PINEAPPLE EXPRESS** (18A, substance abuse) Fri-Thu 9:05

**STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS** (PG) Daily 7:00; Sat, Sun, Tue, Thu 2:00

**LEOUCINEMA**  
780-451-0000

**THE HOUSE BUNNY** (PG, coarse language, not recommended for young children) Fri-Mon 1:10, 3:35; Daily 7:00, 9:30

**DISASTER MOVIE** (14A, crude content) Fri-Mon 1:05, 3:25, Daily 7:05, 9:25

**TROPIC THUNDER** (14A, coarse language, crude content) Daily 7:10, 9:35

**COLLEGE** (18A, coarse language, crude content) Fri-Mon 12:55, 3:20, Daily 6:55, 9:20

**WALL-E** (G) Fri-Mon 1:00, 3:30

**PARKLAND CINEMA 7**  
130 Century Crossing, Service Grove, 780-972-2332, Service Grove, Stearns, Plain, Parkland County

**BABYLON AD** (14A, violence) Daily 7:00, 9:15; Sat-Tue 1:05, 3:10

**DISASTER MOVIE** (14A, crude content) Daily 6:50, 9:00; Sat-Tue 1:15, 3:30

**STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS** (PG) Sat-Tue 1:10, 3:20

**THE HOUSE BUNNY** (PG, coarse language, not recommended for young children) Fri-Mon 1:10, 3:35; Daily 7:00, 9:30

**DISASTER MOVIE** (14A, crude content) Fri-Mon 1:05, 3:25, Daily 7:05, 9:25

**TROPIC THUNDER** (14A, coarse language, crude content) Daily 7:10, 9:35





## FILM CAPSULES

DEATH RACE

ping is Irena's internal struggle amidst the chaos, witnessed as much through the storytelling as it is through Rappoport's subtle yet raw performance. Both realms of action and hidden character engage the viewer until both come full circle in the film's warm though open-ended conclusion.

## NOW PLAYING

### DEATH RACE

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY PAUL WS ANDERSON  
STARRING JASON STATHAM, JOAN ALLEN, TYRESE GIBSON  
★★★

OMAR MOUALLEM / omar@vuwweekly.com

Marrying together the United States' recessive economy and corporate takeovers with our unashamed love affair with reality TV, NASCAR and borderline attempted murder (aka, Ultimate Fighting), *Death Race* is the equivalent of great sex with a prostitute: it's nothing to be proud of, but it sure is fun.

A remake produced by corn-ball king Roger Corman of a 1975 Roger Corman production, *Death Race 2000*, the film modernizes the franchise by playing on modern politics in a very egregious, conspiratorial fashion. Imagine that at the

end of Obama's or McCain's first term (or McCain's replacement after his 2010 heart attack), the economy in America is so depressed and unemployment so rampant that the prisons overflow with desperate criminals (you don't have to imagine very hard). In order to support the prison systems, the US government sells them to private companies, namely businesses entrepreneur turned warden Hennessey (Joan Allen). That sassy, suited super-bitch turns the state pen into a race track where prisoners and their pit crews fight to the death with missile-armed vehicles.

Jensen Ames (Jason Statham) is the latest sucker to fall into the death race trap. A former race car driver fired from his factory job, he's framed for the murder of his wife by a masked ninja. Upon entering Terminal Island prison, he's served an ultimatum by Hennessey: wear the mask of a now-dead champion racer (named Frankenstein) and continue his legacy for one final match, which, if he wins it, will pardon him, or stay locked up for life. Jensen need only be reminded of his baby to accept. So he hops in the drivers seat with his sexy assistant—the future of WWE wrestling divas—Chase (Natalie Martinez), and competes in a three-day race against such *Death Race* superstars as Machine Gun Joe (Tyrese Gibson).

Stupid, chauvinistic and preposterous,

*Death Race* is a soul-sucking thrill ride. Paul WS Anderson, director of video game adaptations *Mortal Kombat* and *Resident Evil* does what he was built to do: he titillates with sex and violence, and regresses the audience to barbarians. In fact, at the showing I attended, there was actually a row of cheering moviegoers, championing our hero every time he sent limbs flying. It's just that exciting. It turns a 21st century Cinemaplex into an ancient Roman coliseum.

### THE HOUSE BUNNY

DIRECTED BY TIED WILT  
WRITTEN BY KAREN MCCULLAH-LUTZ, KIRSTEN SMITH  
STARRING ANNA FARRIS, COLIN HANKS, EMMA STONE  
★★

DAVID BERRY / david@vuwweekly.com

Most of the criticism of *The House Bunny* has focused on the fact that Anna Farris is a gifted comic actress who has been stuck in some bad films (some really, really bad films, like the *Scary Movie* franchise and *Waiting ...*); if only she could find someone able to use her talents she'd get more recognition.

These critics are half-right. Farris certainly is a gifted comedienne, albeit one born about 20 years too late. Her greatest strengths, slapstick pratfalls and a full commitment to vacant-eyed dimwittedness, take someone with deft timing and an assured comedic intelligence, but comedy has, for the most part, left that kind of clowning behind—which would explain why so many of these movies, which I would argue do play to those strengths (it's no accident that the sorority Farris' character takes over in *Bunny* is christened ZAZ), feel tired and hacky. She's probably this generation's Leslie Nielsen, but his movies aren't exactly setting new standards for comedy these days either.

Unfortunately, "tired"—or perhaps "hacky"—is a pretty good description of the film itself. In a premise that might be offensive if it weren't so over-used, cen-

terfold-hopeful Shelley (Farris) gets kicked out of the Playboy Mansion by a scheming fellow playmate, and ends up at the most loseriest sorority on campus. Naturally, she turns them from nerdy social outcasts to social butterfly babes, all thanks to a few makeovers and some block-rockin' parties.

*House Bunny* tries to save itself from the obvious charges of sexism with a subplot about a smart, sensitive guy who won't fall for Shelley's usual sexy tricks, and a half-hearted moral about being yourself, but the fact everyone's a chesty sexpot by the end undercuts that message quite nicely. Essentially, the film changes its moral from "if you're sexy, people will like you," to "if you're sexy, you can be yourself, and people will still like you." Gentlemen: to progress.

It's not a complete waste, though:



Farris is a pretty good old-timey jokester, and she gets some help from Emma Stone (*Superbad*), who, between this film and *The Rocker* (see below), is carving out a pretty nice niche as a sharp, disaffected young woman. Stone won't be her generation's next great comic actress or anything, but her brand of comedy certainly feels more of-the-time than Farris' tomfoolery.

### THE ROCKER

DIRECTED BY PETER CATTANEO  
WRITTEN BY MAYA FORBES, WALLY WOLOUDARSKY,  
RYAN JAFFE  
STARRING RAINN WILSON, CHRISTINA APPLEGATE  
★★

DAVID BERRY / david@vuwweekly.com

A sweet little comedy that's sweet far more often than it's funny, *The Rocker* would probably benefit greatly from casting someone else in its lead role. The eponymous hero, one Robert "Fish" Fishman (Rainn Wilson), is an unrestrained man-child of the type popularized by Will Ferrell and Jack Black, a slightly out-of-shape wild man who doesn't let his protruding gut and lack of sense hold him back one bit. Wilson tries to rock as much as possible, but he's really better suited to the restrained, nebbish role he plays at his day job on *The Office*: his awkwardness is a quiet one, not a screaming, unkempt one. As such, the numerous moments of physical comedy rarely have much punch, falling flat as often as he does.

Still, Wilson is surrounded by enough talented comics—*The Rocker* is practically summer vacation for the UCB/SNL/30 Rock crowd—to draw out some occasional laughs, and the trio of young actors that make up the rest of the band do an admirable job of getting across their growing pains. Thrust into the spotlight when Fish ends up caught on YouTube practicing the drums naked, the foursome embarks on a tour that sees the rock and roll lifestyle—both the sex-and-drugs one advocated by Fish and the more slowed-down pace each of them takes up—putting strain on real life.

It's certainly nothing new, but a few supporting performance keep it fresh enough throughout. Emma Stone, as the band's cynical bassist, is particularly good with both a sarcastic one-liner and the slow-burning relationship with her lead singer, while *30 Rock*'s Jason Sudeikis is perfect as the asshole A&R who manages the band, equal parts smarmy, over-excited and lecherous. ♥

# Behind the 8-ball

## FLICKS | DVD DETECTIVE

JOSEF BRAUN & BRIAN GIBSON  
dvdetective@vuwweekly.com

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vuwweekly.com

There's this moment in *Turn the River* (2007) where this guy who sells phony passports waits for a client in a pool hall, one of these gloomily slick looking joints where the proprietor actually brushes the tables, where everyone seems to be on the make, and amateurs don't feel too welcome. Passport guy's been waiting for a while, killing time shooting stick on his own, and once his client finally arrives he can't keep himself from venting his sheer annoyance at the game, its tedium and unforgiving geometries. His client, a pool shark, someone so attuned to the game she actually sleeps on a pool table, tells him the reason he doesn't like pool is simple: he sucks.

This moment struck me because, well, I suck. Okay, I can probably beat my grand-

ma, but basically I stink. Yet I love pool. Which means that I steer clear of halls like the one in *Turn the River*, sticking to musty dives where the sticks are warped and the tables shabby, booze-stained and uneven, where the jukebox is always in the way when you need to make that decisive shot and everyone's too drunk to bother noticing how we bend all the rules just to stretch our buck as long as possible—that much more time to sip beer and listen to the happy snap-drawl of those chalk-smeared spheres rolling along the spot-lit green expanse. How, you might ask, can I enjoy something so much when I'm so bad at it? I don't know, blame it on the movies maybe.

I probably saw *The Color of Money* (1986) on pay-TV a dozen times as a kid. I remember my astonishment, even then, at how much I actually kinda loved Tom Cruise, how perfect he seemed as the young hot shot, how elegant and infinitely more alluring Paul Newman's Fast Eddie Felson was, the aging version of some other young hot shot from some old movie I'd never seen, and how Mary Eliz-

abeth Mastrantonio, the woman with tenuous allegiances to both men, was the most intriguing of the three. But mostly I loved the atmosphere of the game as it played cinematically. And it's a good thing I dug *The Color of Money* as much as I did back then, since the field of pool movies would prove either barren or badly tilled in the subsequent 20 years.

I KNEW ZILCH about *Turn the River*, but it had Rip Torn, a friendly quote from critic David Edelstein on the case and a rather fetching cover image of Famke Janssen confidently handling a cue stick. It's the writing/directing debut of Chris Eigerman, a seasoned actor, which perhaps explains why he wanted to make what is essentially a character study in the New Hollywood vein, a movie about a loner who lives out of a truck, apparently owns maybe two outfits, has what we call "a past," and does one thing really well: beat the pants off of cocky pricks, taking them for all they've got in merciless rounds of one pocket. Every character study is of course

also a study of milieu, and *Turn the River* promises viewers a 92-minute plunge into those long-neglected pool halls.

Kaily (Janssen) is wearying of the hustling life. We know this because whenever some old acquaintance sees her again—like Torn's crusty sage—they always tell her how she looks like shit. (I just kept thinking, "Dude, that's Famke Janssen. She looks good.") She's got a plan to snatch her estranged preteen son (Jaymie Doman, a great find, with a goofy, Tobey Maguire smile that catches you off guard) from his dad and head for Canada, exactly the sort of lame-brained plan that these loner anti-heroes always seem to make, but hey, people do stupid stuff in real life, too. All she needs to do is build up some serious funds for those passports.

The movie's not bad. It does indeed generate a pleasingly distinctive air, lurking along the peripheries of the tables, echoing those theatrical overhead lights in other interestingly stylized scenes, and even offering a colourful array of eccentric supporting characters to back up

Janssen's genuinely compelling, textured lead, like Kaily's ex, a sad dad nakedly jealous of his own son. But the movie's awkward, too, and doesn't quite earn its tone, faux-urgency or ending. That this is Eigerman's first feature is fairly obvious to anyone with even a passing habit of nitpicking—did those same two extras just pass by three times in the last 30 seconds, walking in the same direction?—but what matters is that Eigerman seems to have decided on what kind of movie he wanted to make before he actually made it, failing to capitalize on what he actually had in the can. To narrow it down, I'd argue that the biggest single problem here is actually the music, which comes courtesy of Clogs and is perfectly interesting in itself, but steals all the potential humour—sorry, but sleeping on a pool table should be funny, guys—and the actual sense of studying this character, rather than just dunking her in a bath of generic indie moodiness. Still, she looks just right craning her long body over those tables. ♥



LAGWAGON / 38

40 THIEVES / 40

AIRBORNE / 41

# E-town band gets down to some *Concentrated Living*

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuweekly.com

Sometimes all the pieces fall into place without difficulty. Sometimes it all comes together and you're off and running with the wind at your back. But sometimes—for the **City Streets**, anyway—life is just a little more difficult than that.

The band's touring adventures have been well documented over the last couple of years, sometimes in this very paper, as well as on their new album, *Concentrated Living*. It turns out that the album is not exactly as new as one might at first think—sessions for the record took place over a year ago.

"Well, we recorded it in summer last July and August in Vancouver and that process went great—we recorded it in two weeks and mixed it and had it, and then we just were getting the money together for artwork and all that stuff," recalls singer/guitarist Rick Reid with a shrug. "For various reasons it got passed down the line to

three different artists and somehow at the end of the mess we finally finished the artwork a couple weeks ago."

But even as the band slowly dragged the record out of the limbo of

the past year, the creative wheels kept turning—which is not all that surprising for a group of musicians who threw an EP of new songs up on the internet as a free download simply



because they had some tunes they felt were worth putting out not all that

Cindy Frey

PREVIEW

FRI, AUG 29 (8 PM)

**THE CITY STREETS**  
WITH SECRET FIRES, PLUS PERFECT,  
WHAT'S WRONG TOHEI?  
THE ARTERY, SB

long after their first album had been released. So while they worked towards getting this latest album out, Reid kept writing new songs

"We could make another record right now," he admits. "We're always working on new songs. The creative process is the whole point in doing this for us. With this record, some of these songs are two years old at this point and sometimes we forget, 'Oh, we've got to play these, 'cause the record's not even out yet,' but we're already playing two or three new songs just to keep it interesting for us."

CITY STREETS: TONY PAGE/ES

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# Requiem for the hipster

## MUSIC BACKLASH BLUES

ROLAND FLEMMING  
columnist and author of *Crash*

After reading Douglas Haddow's recent article in *Adbusters*, "Hipster: The Dead End of Western Civilization," I couldn't help but wonder about the subculture I live amongst. Other than sounding judgemental and out of touch with the subject matter (by his definition, he himself is a hipster if he is hanging out where they hang out), Haddow's main point holds water: for the most part, in a real world sense, hipsters do not contribute to the furthering of society and are lacking the political impetus of every North American counterculture before it. His assertion is that the hipster is largely a consumer group, their fashion being usurped by major corporations, their music taste being remarketed back to them with constructed bands and pseudo-indie motion pictures.

This doesn't account for the main hipster concept: do-it-yourself. When hipsters want a certain kind of music, they make it in their

bedrooms themselves. You want shorts? Cut your pants in half. Hipsters are inherently creative, self-sufficient people. But am I talking about hipsters here anyway? If a hipster is someone who goes to certain places to dance, listens to certain kinds of music and wears certain clothes as a means of "street cred," where does their belief system come into play? Haddow's article basically states that a hipster is anyone who would be offended by being called a hipster, but what does that make someone who doesn't care about labels?

How do you explain this sub-sub-culture of people who identify with the typically considered tenets of hipsterdom (vintage clothes, obscure media, general counterculture), but do not use these concepts as status symbols? Am I a hipster if I like Basquiat but keep it to myself? Does having grey American Apparel slacks make me a victim of conformity if I merely like the color grey? Do we need another name for people who do not deal in the negative aspects of the hipster?

**THE THING THAT** anti-hipster journalists like Haddow do not account for is that any

time a social movement occurs (be it the Beat Generation, the Black Panthers, hippies, whatever), the concept can't possibly stay honest in the Western world. If the original purpose of a social movement is to not conform, no group can ever fulfill this promise forever, because the more popular the movement gets, the more people with less at stake and less reason to read the manual join, therefore leading to a more diffused movement.

The article has a point that is reflected in the arcs of all the previously paramount social groups: the commercialization and appropriation of the "hipster" idea by mass media is going to spell the end of it, at least in its current form. Haddow's hipster lives and dies on cool and nothing is more uncool than hearing your favorite song in a Coke commercial. I just don't think it's the end of the world, or Western civilization, for that matter. Like grunge and punk before it, there will always be internal and external criticism of a youthful generation, founded or unfounded. Hipster is as hipster does: it's ironic that someone would care so much about people who aren't supposed to care about anything. **V**



SAT. AUG. 23 / SWANK / WUNDERBAR

As the Fringe was wrapping up just down the road, a sweaty gaggle of folks crowded into Wunderbar for some hootin' and hollerin' country tunes. Swank belted out a rollicking set of balls-to-the-wall, drinking-and-screwing country music with near religious fury. **V**

See more photos and read Phil Duperron's full review at [vueweekly.com](http://vueweekly.com).

Progressive and Trip-Hop, 12am-2:30am, interested guest DJs inquire at [kelly@michieli.com](mailto:kelly@michieli.com), karaoke with Tizzy, amateur strip contest, 9pm

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**FLUXY BEASTS** Mondays with DJ S W A G

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**PAWN SHOP** 8pm-1am, 9pm-1am, 11pm-1am, 1am-3am

**BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE** Open Stage every Tues night with Mark Ammar and Noel (Big Cat) Mackenzie featuring Carson Cule 8:30pm-1am, no cover

**SECOND CUP** Open mic every Tue, 7-9pm

**SEIDENERS PUB** Tuesday All Star Jam with Alicia Tait and Ricky Sidecar, 8pm

**TAPHOUSE** Molson Open Stage Jam with Simon Bennett, 8pm-midnight

**WED LIVE MUSIC**

**BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE** Floor CJSR's Eddie Lunchpail, Woottop, Dub at The Dog with DJ Degree

**BUDDY'S** Free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser, 9pm

**BSHIFRAMA'S** 8pm-1am, 9pm-1am, 11pm-1am, 1am-3am

**FUNKY BUDHA WHITE** Live Latin and Salsa music, dance lessons 8-10pm

**GINGUR SKY** Basement Tuesdays

**RED STAR** Tuesdays Experimental Indie Rock, Hip Hop, Electro with DJ Hot Philly

**SAPPY'S RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE** Tapas Tuesday, popular house beats with DJ Kevin Wong 8pm-12am

**SPINNYWORLD JAZZ AND ROLLER SKATING DISCO** Top 40 request with a mix of retro and disco, 7pm-12 midnight

**WED LIVE MUSIC**

**BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE** Floor Glitter Gulch Wednesdays live

**BLUES ON WHITE**

**JOVEN SOCIAL CLUB** every Wed, 7pm

**WEDNESDAY PUB** Wednesdays hosted by Rock 'n' Roll Kenny

**LEVEL 2 LOUNGE** Open mic

**PAWN SHOP** An Evening with the

Mike Plume Band—Reunion Tour, \$13 at TicketMaster

**PLEASANTVIEW COMMUNITY HALL** Acoustic Bluegrass jam presented by the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society every Wednesday evening

**ROCK FISH JAZZ CLUB** unplugged jam, 9pm-1am, no cover

**STARLITE ROOM** The Creepshow, AKAs, One Second 2 Late, no minors, 8pm (door); \$10 (door); if you have a ticket for Anti-Flag you will get in for free

**STREETS TALK LOUNGE** (acoustic) every Wed

**WELT UNDERGROUND** Style Wednesday Live hip-hop, every Wednesday

**WED LIVE MUSIC**

**WEDNESDAY PUB** Wednesdays Soulful Deep House with Nic-E and Smoo

**BANK ULTRA LOUNGE** Wednesday Nights with DJ Harley

**BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE** Floor RetroActive Rad & Alternative 80s and '90s, Post Punk, New Wave, Garage, Brit, Mod, Rock and Roll

with LL Cool Joe

**BUDDY'S** Hump day with DJ Sexxy

**FLUXY BEASTS** Wednesdays Rock This

**FOX** Wind-up Wednesdays R&B, hip-hop, reggae, old skool, reggaeton with InVinceable, Touch II, weekly guest DJs

**LEGENDS PUB** Hip hop/R&B with DJ Spincycle

**NEW CITY LIKWD LOUNGE** A/J/DJ Wednesday: no minors, no cover

**ROCK FISH JAZZ CLUB** metal every Wednesday

**RED STAR** Guest DJs every Wednesday

**STREETS TALK LOUNGE** Wednesdays Hip-Hop 9pm

**STOLI'S** B-Party Wednesdays House, progressive and electronica with Rudy Electro, DJ Rystar, Space Age and weekly guests, 9pm-2am, [www.beatparty.net](http://www.beatparty.net)

**WUNDERBAR** Wednesday's with DJ Spincycle

**WEDNESDAY PUB** Wednesday's with DJ Spincycle



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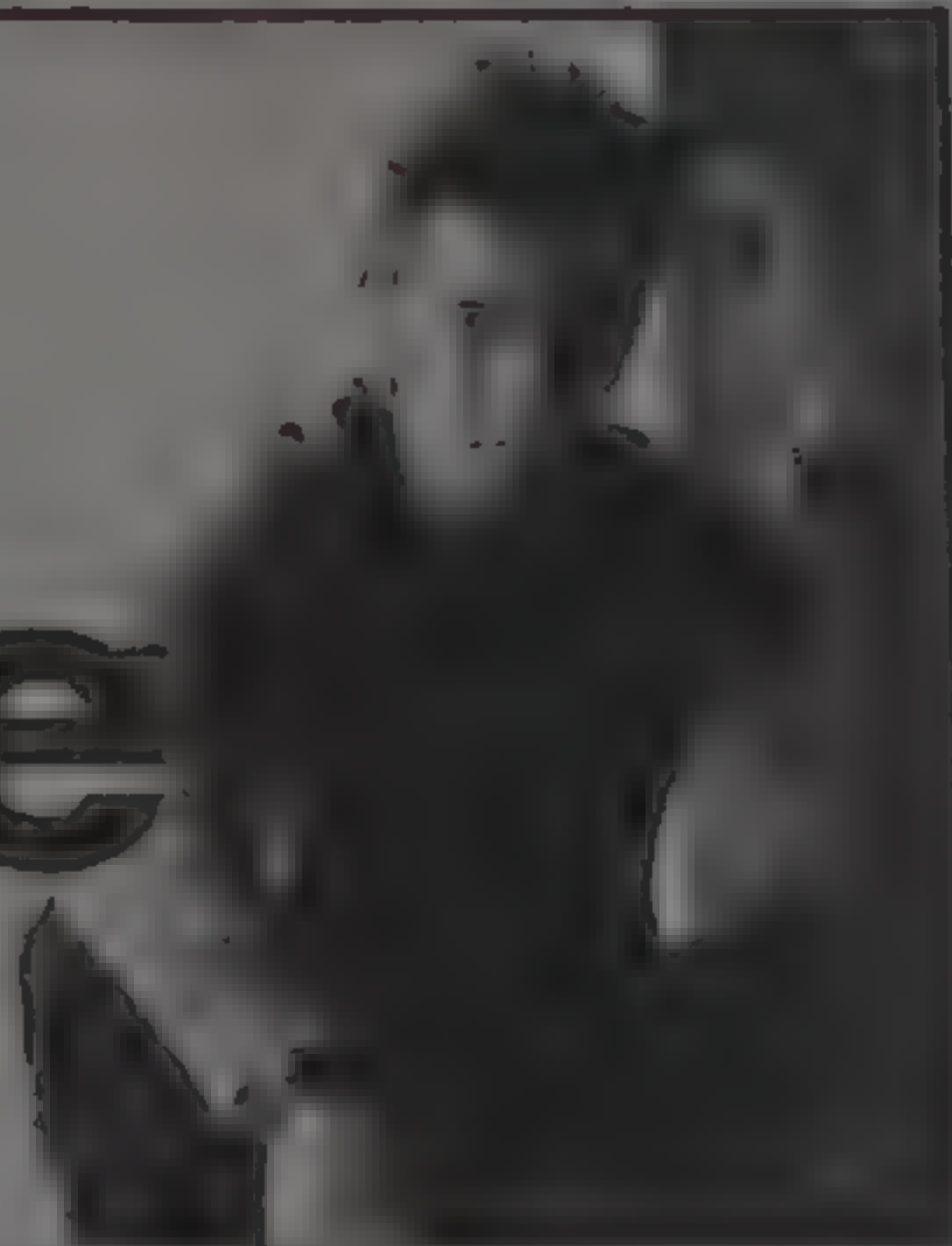
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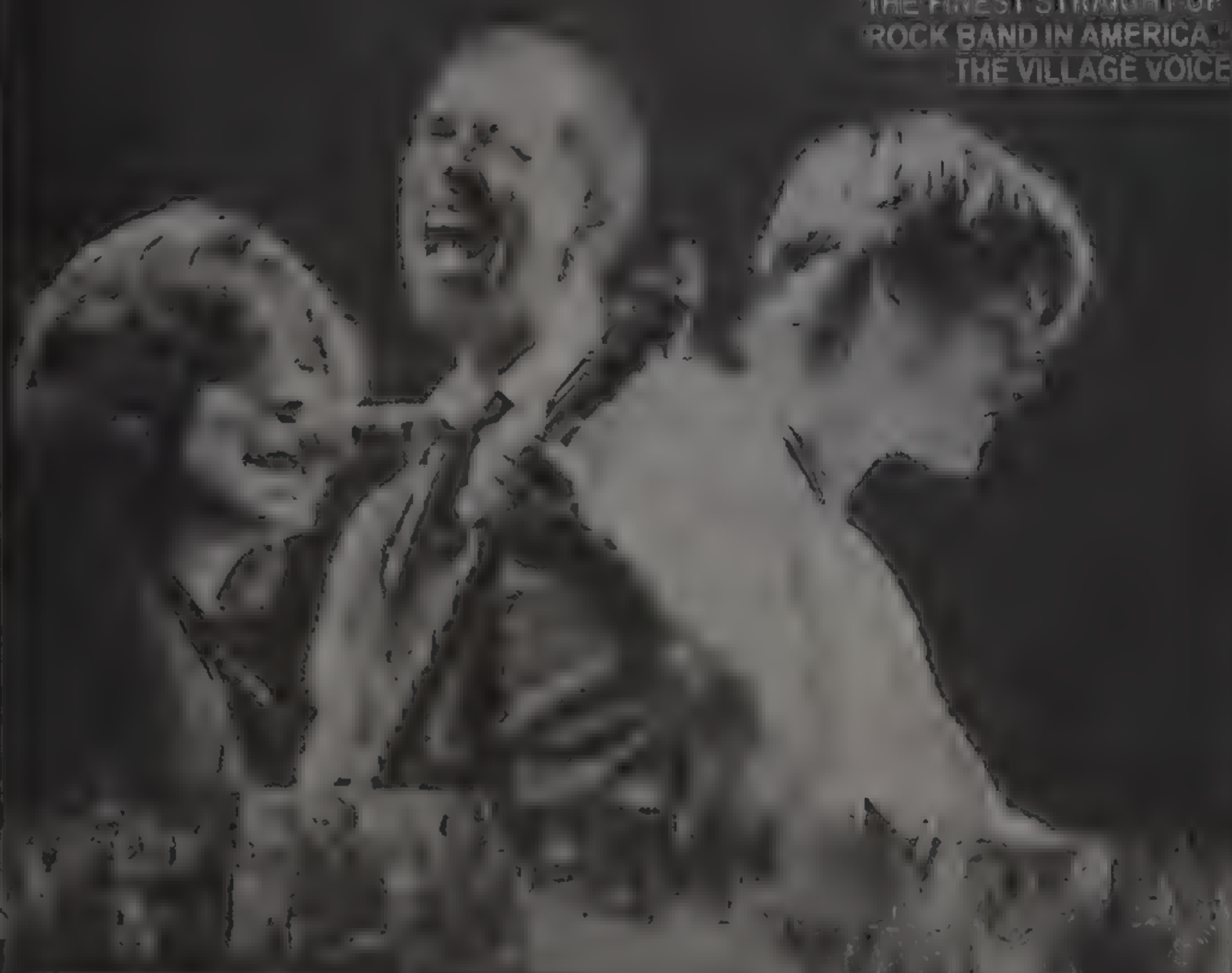


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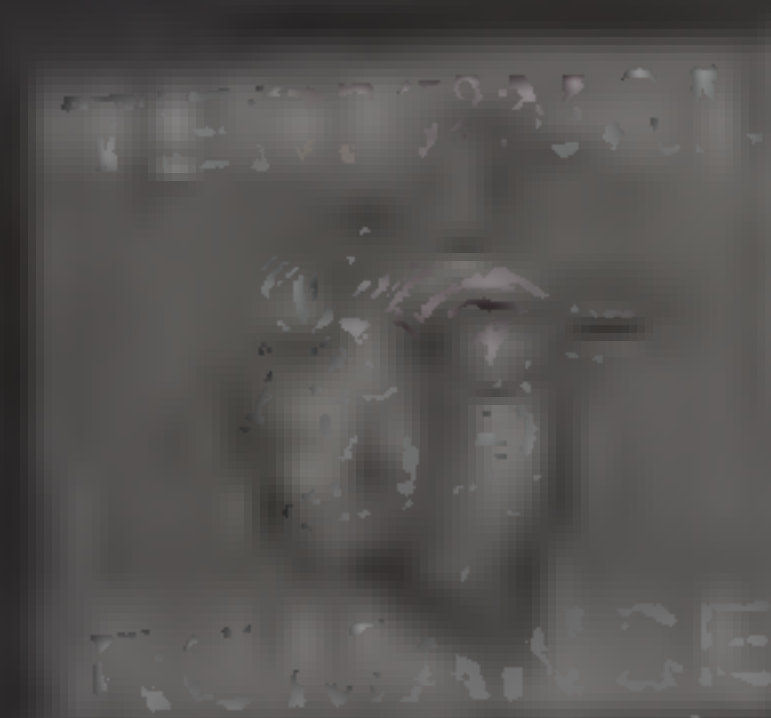
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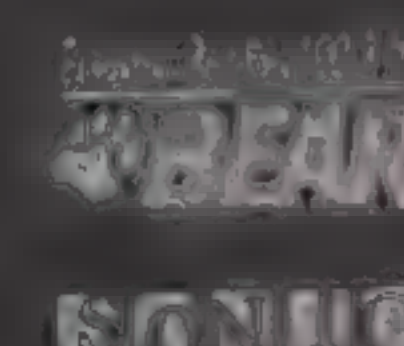
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# Hearts and solo

## Christina Martin strips her rootsy pop to the bones playing live

**MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE** [www.247magazine.com](http://www.247magazine.com)  
Listening to *Two Hearts*, the sophomore record released in late spring by Halifax-based songwriter **Christina Martin**, there is really only one pressing question: was there a happy ending?

"Well, he's thrusting himself in my face right now, trying to distract me," she laughs. "So I guess it turned out alright—so far."

That dangling caveat underscores *Two Hearts*, a confessional, lovelorn valentine to emotional endurance, textured under the tasteful ears of East Coast musician/producer Dale Murray and whipped into an achy lather by Martin's smoky, bruised-

PREVIEW

SAL ADRIAN FOR  
**CHRISTINA MARTIN**  
BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO: TONY

ingénue vocals. Martin's songwriting eschews the quirky to travel the main highway of country-flavoured pop from an era before it hardened under the candy coating of overproduction and over-processed fake-virginal starlets. *Two Hearts* seemingly maps out a grown-up romance, one on the verge of collapse despite tenderness and the best of intentions, struggling to right itself. Murray and Martin nestle these fragile joys and fears in deft instru-

mentation that ebbs and swells with sonic elements like jangly guitar, twangy banjo, supple lap steel, soulful organ and even strings and horns.

"Not all the songs are about the same relationship," Martin adds. "But they are all about loss and exit events that happened with me or in my family, that type of thing. I wanted the album to have a common thread—the songs have a similar vibe and emotion, but not the same sound. It's easier for people to enjoy the melancholy rollercoaster, ride ups and downs if it sounds like it belongs together."

**HER SONGS** also share a similar lyrical pitch. Martin is both bare and plain-

spoken—like water pouring into a dry canyon after heavy rain, she plunges down the most straightforward course through what she wants to communicate. There's no fancy wordplay, few metaphors or elaborate scenarios, just clear-eyed expressions of feeling and need.

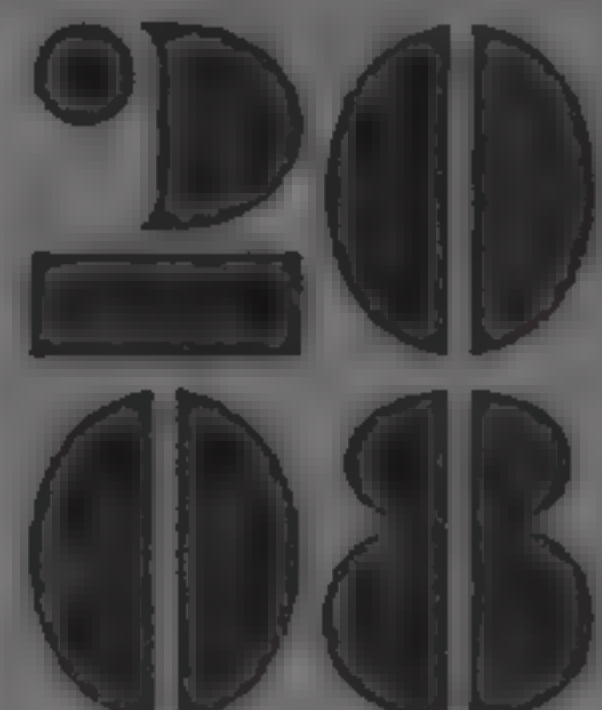
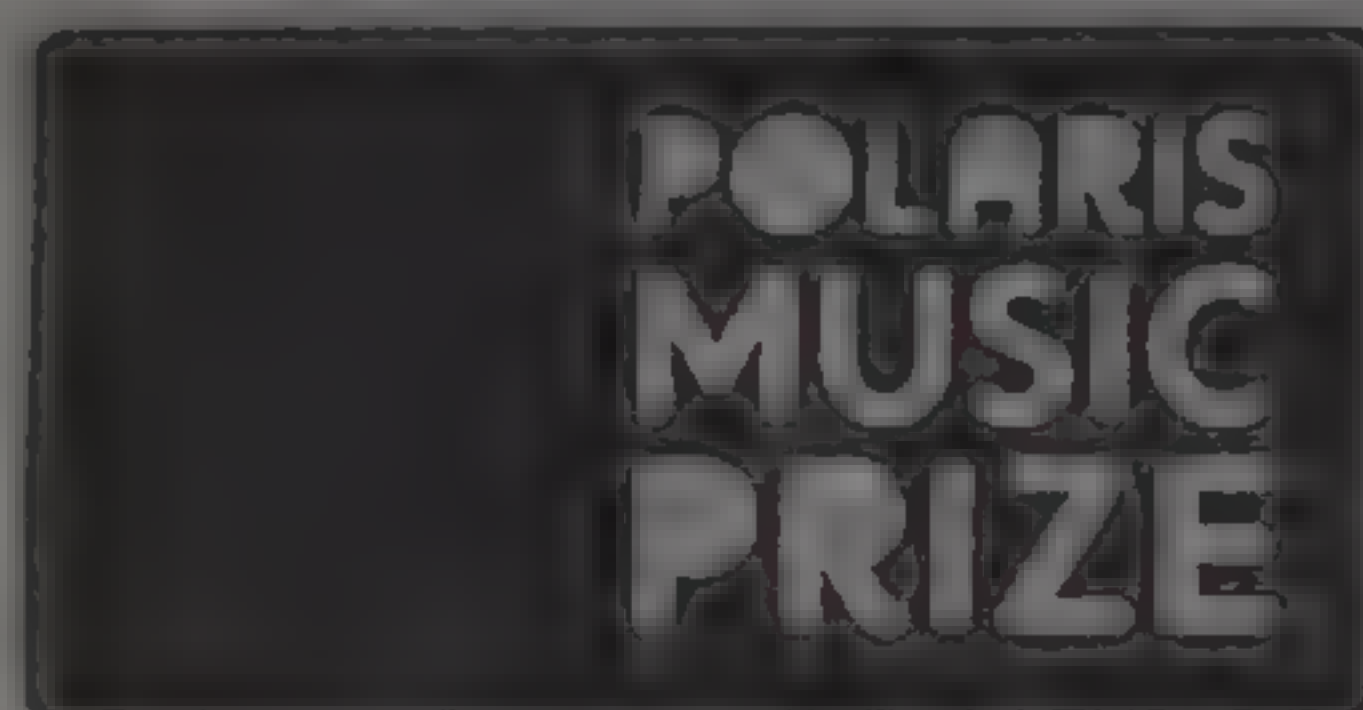
"I pretty much stick with a simple melody and simple lyrics," she explains. "The strongest songs are often really simple. I start with something I want to say and go right to, 'How can I sum this up?' Sometimes I have hidden messages, but it's not usually a mystery—this is how I feel; this is what I want to say. When I can't find the right words or if I feel it

will sound cheesy or bad, I'm less direct, but I think simplicity has a lot of impact. And words that impact me today may have an impact on someone else tomorrow."

These barest aspects of her songs are in the spotlight at solo shows, but Martin points out going it alone creates an intimacy with audiences she relishes.

"I think it's a craft to tell a story and get people to share something in return," Martin says. "I go off a lot, sometimes talk about the song or throw out these general topics and ask if anyone's been affected by the same things. It kind of turns it into a big relating experience." ▀

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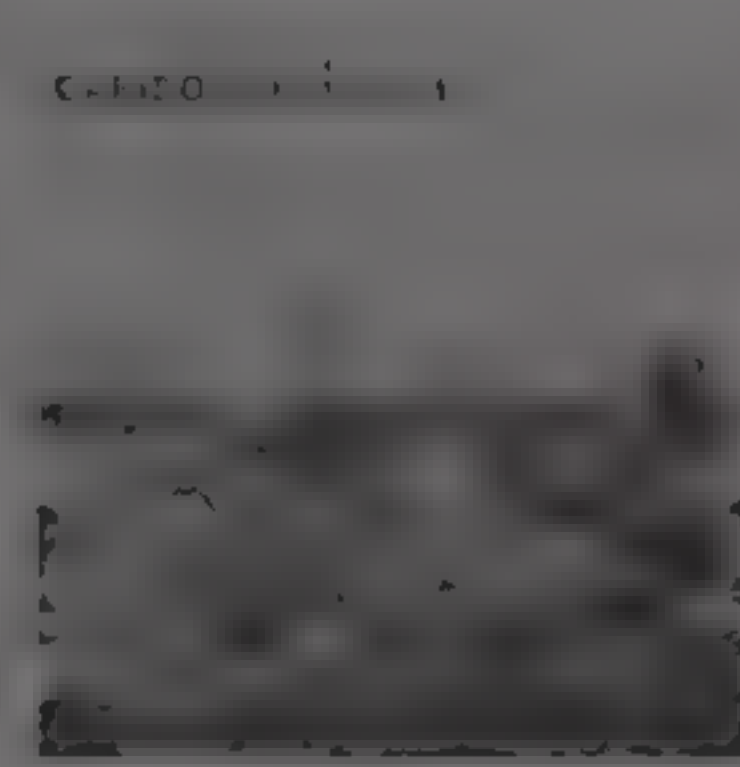
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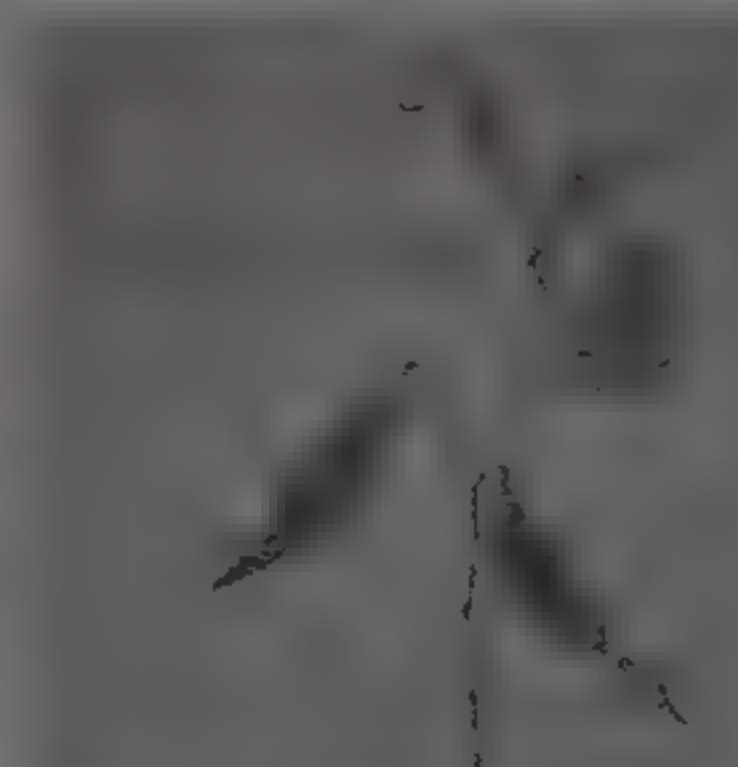
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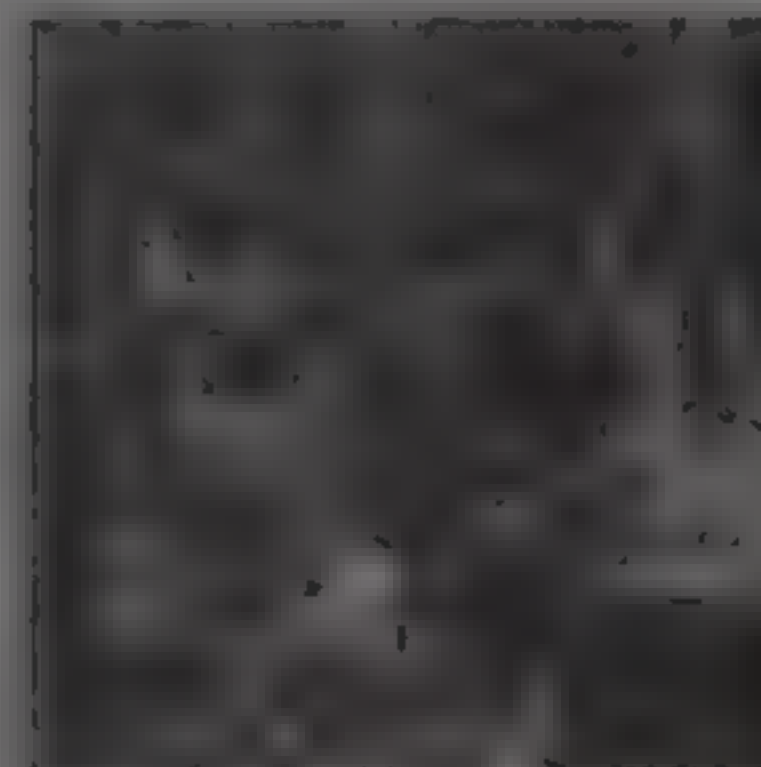
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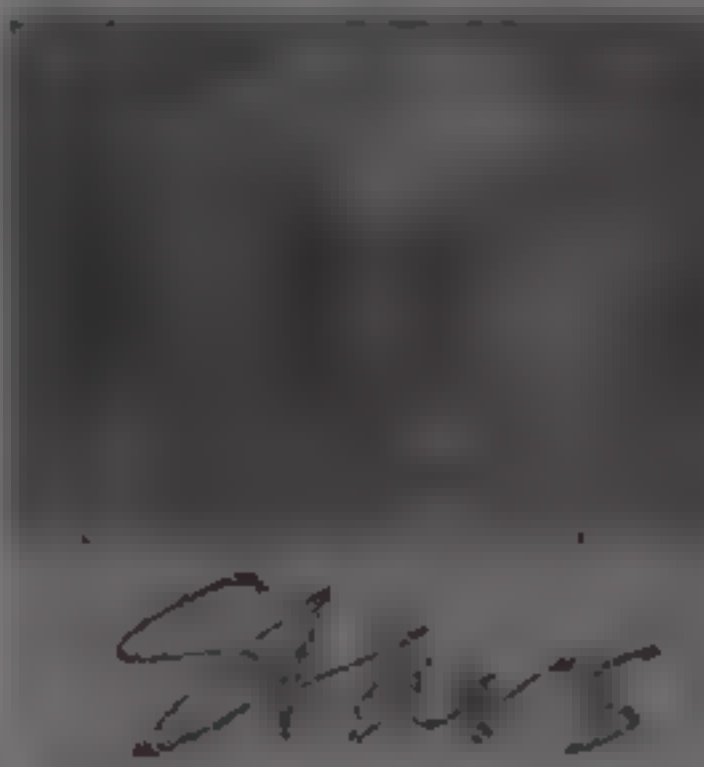
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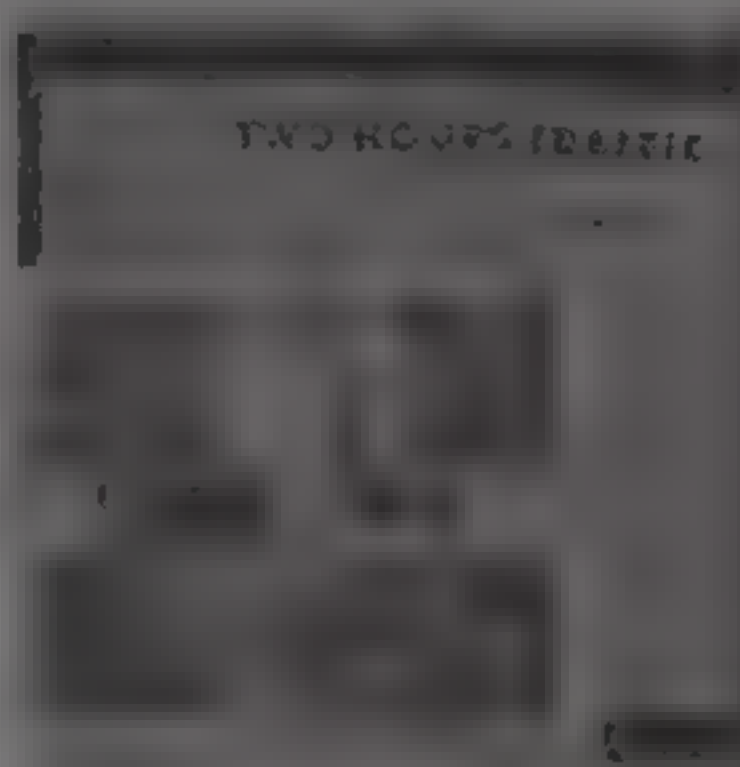
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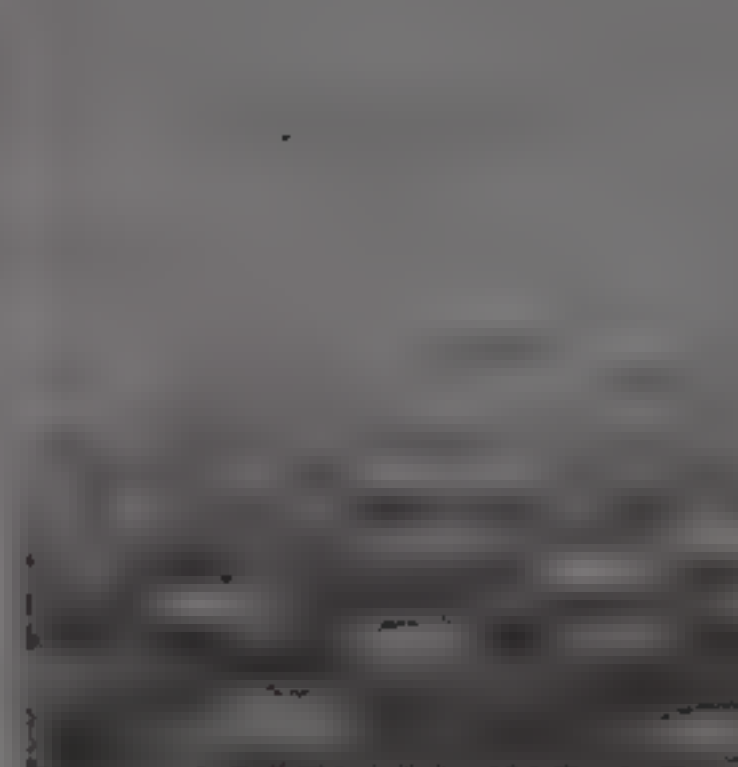
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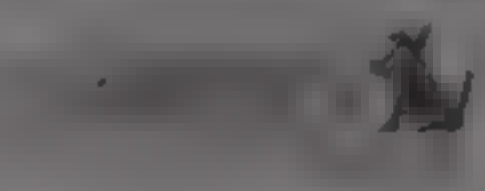
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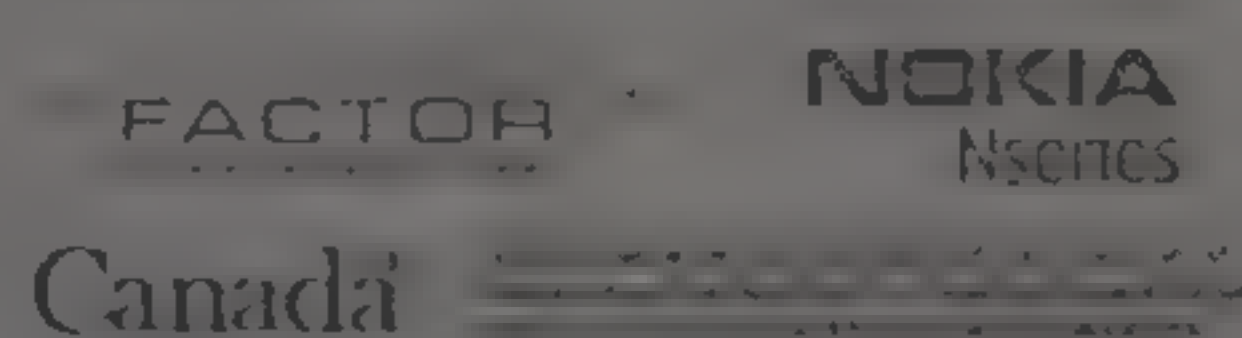
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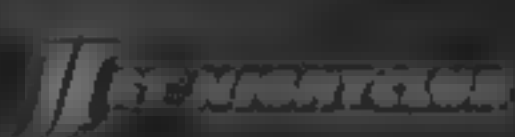


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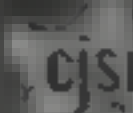
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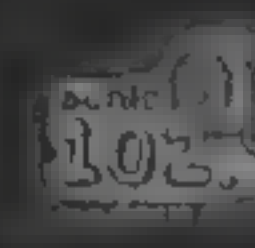
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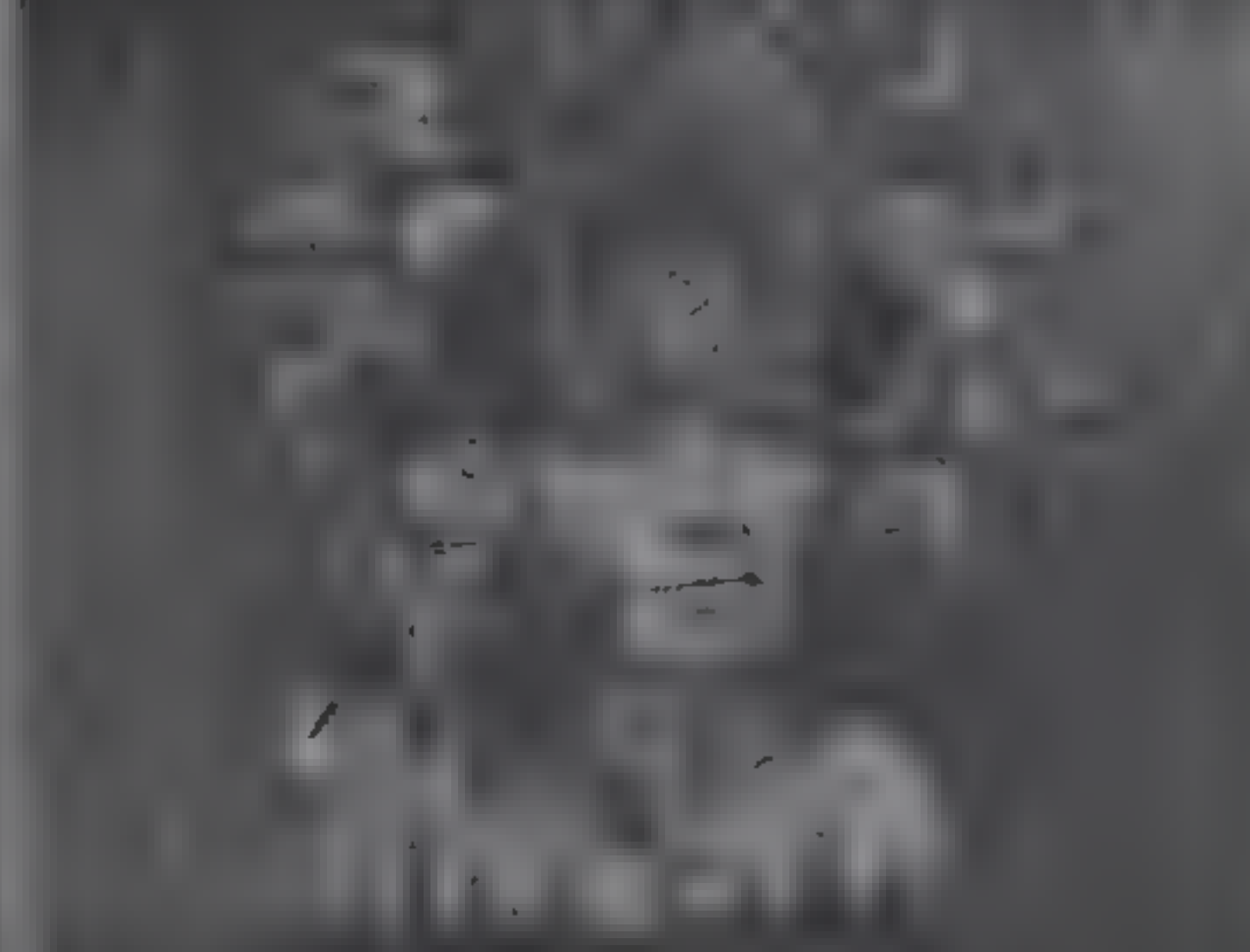
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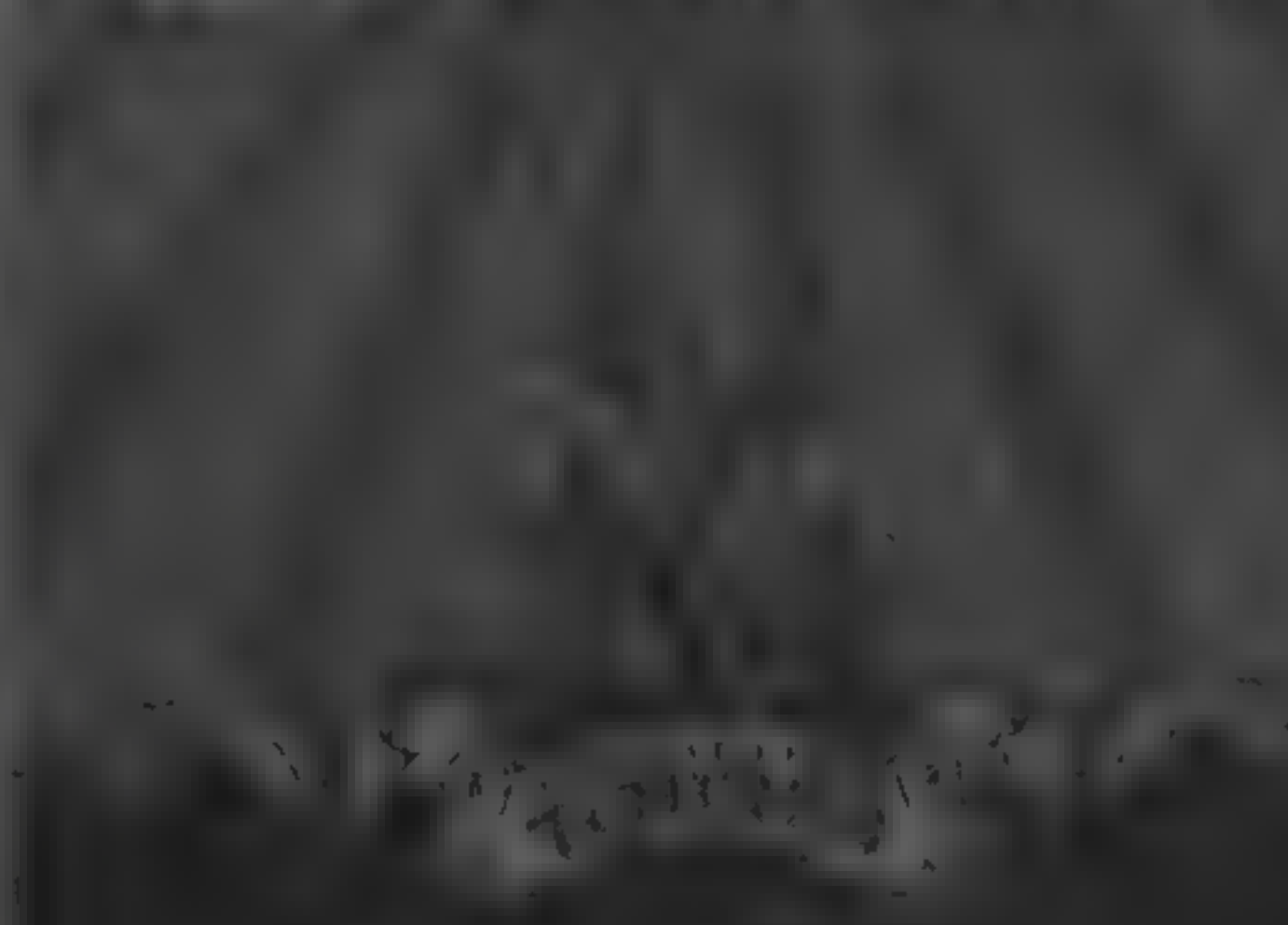
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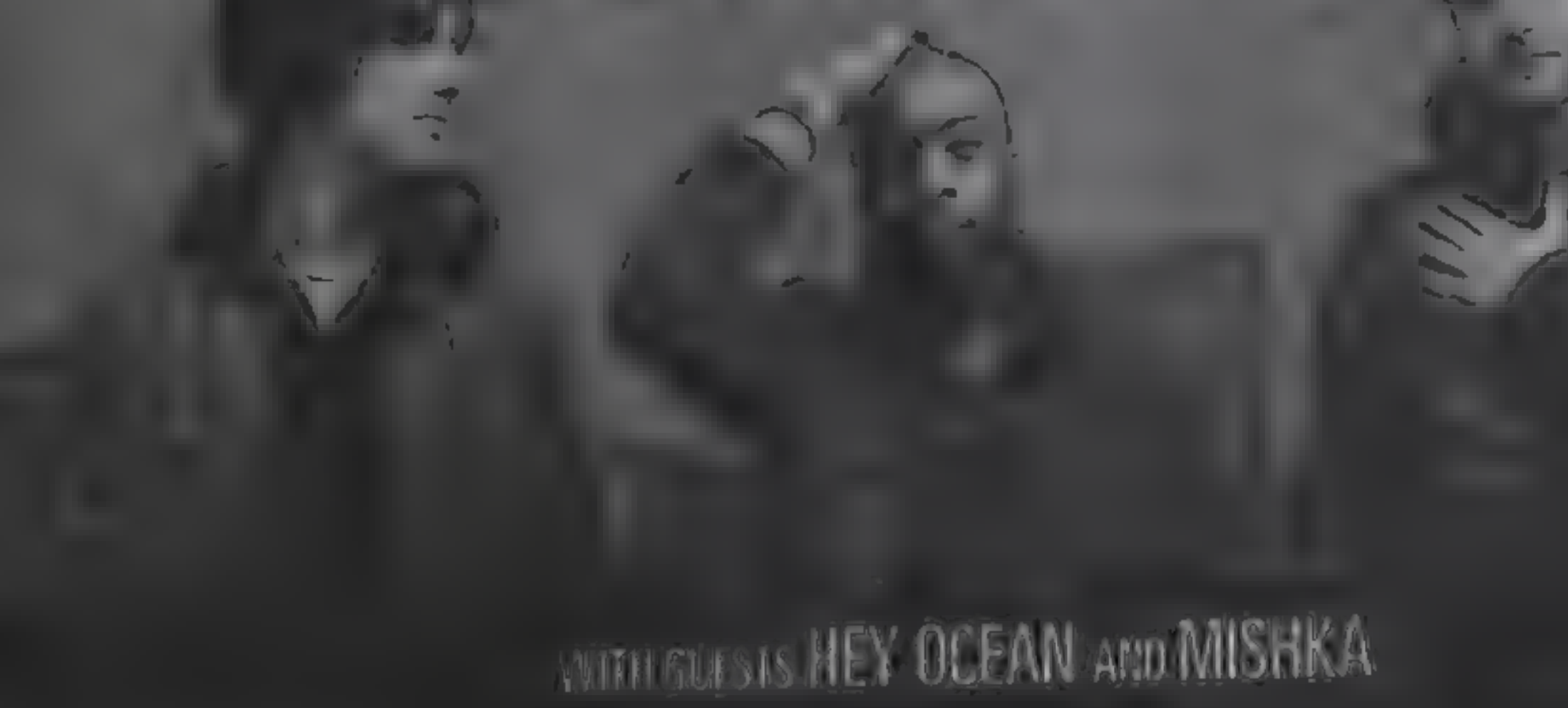


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# Dropping a Log-wagon

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@voeweekly.com

Some say the best way to handle nervousness on stage is to picture your audience naked. Conducting an interview with someone like *Fat Cape*, singer for *Lagwagon* and *Me First and the Gimme Gimmes*, can conjure up a similar case of nerves.

"Hold on one sec, I'm going to switch phones ... I'm going to go to the other ... it's too hard to explain," Cape says. "One sec. Hello? Um."

Then that unmistakable sound: a flush.

"Are you on the toilet?" I ask. "I didn't want to say it, but the cat's out of the bag. You caught me on the toilet," he explains. "It's really funny, because I looked at the clock and I said, I've got 30 seconds and I thought I could do it, and when nature calls,

PREVIEW

SAT, AUG 30 (7 PM)  
**LAGWAGON**  
WITH THE RAUCOUS CATS, ME FIRST  
DINWOODIE LOUNGE, \$24 (ALL AGES)

what can you do?"

Now that we're all picturing Cape on the throne, now that we've had to ask about the toilet, there aren't any questions weirder to have to ask of a total stranger.

Well, "TOTAL STRANGER" is a bit of a misnomer. As the first band signed to NOFX singer Fat Mike's Fat Wreck Chords back in the early '90s, Lagwagon has earned a rightful place in SoCal punk history. There is simply no mistaking the band's honest lyrics and production, nor its raucous stage energy. It's this straight-up characteristic that

Cape senses will see the band through the trials much of the music industry (read: loss in CD sales) finds itself in.

"Ultimately, it's about music. It's not about marketing and blah, blah, blah and all this other crap that comes with being in a band, and so making records, sometimes it just feels like kind of futile thing," Cape says. "I see a day, not too long from now when bands are just giving music away, you know. I mean everybody does it now, but I mean everyone. I just don't know how people are going to get creative and continue to market selling music when it's so easy to get. It doesn't make a lot of sense."

"There's two worlds of music. There's the Disney world, the world of artists that just go out there and they're lip syncing, or they're singing over backing tracks that are pre-recorded, and then there's rock bands



and punk bands that never really had all the frills," he adds. "They're just playing the music and I like the fact that when my band plays live, we sound pretty much exactly the same as our record, because we're not really doing anything. There's no smoke."

Cape, like many other musicians, sees the benefit of releasing a few songs at a time and completely doing away with the album. That said, Lagwagon has just released an EP, *I Think My Older Brother Used to Listen to Lagwagon*, but Cape sees the EP as a bit of a compromise, a way to get the music out there while still acknowledging that many folks are picking and choosing the tracks they want to download.

"I just didn't feel like making a full-length," he says. "I'm just not really sure about the album as an art form,

anyway. It feels like a little bit like a dead art form to me."

Music, however, is alive and well. "Music to me is the greatest thing that ever happened. It's the one thing internationally that everyone in the world connects to, and it's a powerful thing and it's all positive. But how we get music to people now had totally changed," he says. "Music is the one form of art that seems to appeal to everyone from the youngest age. You can't hold it in your hand. It's a sound. I think it's very interesting, and I think there's a lot of power in it, and I think that can be used. It's amazing the things that politicians wield to get through to people, but music is not used often enough for solidarity and to bring people together. It's powerful." v





# Making up isn't hard to do

CAROLYN NIKODYM /carolyn@vuwweekly.com

**H**ave you ever been spent? Really spent? Where your friends and family are telling to take a break, to kick back, but you know you can't. Not only because you're the only one who can land all those balls you're juggling, but also because if you stop, you're stopping. And maybe never getting back up.

After some 1200 shows in eight years, that was exactly where Bonnyvillian **Mike Plume** found himself. Spent and broken hearted. He actually began to feel it more than 400 shows before that, but it took him a couple of years to admit it to himself and the band he'd criss-crossed Canada, Europe and the US with.

"It was in April of '02, I sat down with the guys, and I said, 'Here's the deal, I'm really, really, really tired, and I need a break,'" Plume relates. "I also know we all need to work so that we can pay our bills, so if you guys are okay with playing two or three shows a month—and granted we were coming off years of playing 20 to 25 shows a month—so if you guys are okay with playing two or three shows a month to pay everybody's rent, I can take a break."

As it turned out, the band—made up of Meck Meyers, Dave Klym and Ernie Basiliadis—wanted to strike out on their own. And they did, with no hard feelings, trying out new sounds as the Populars.

Plume played solo, but very seldom, in the intervening years. He discovered what it was like to live in one place for more than 12 hours.

PREVIEW

WED, SEP 3 (8 PM)  
**THE MIKE PLUME BAND**  
THE PAWN SHOP, \$13

"I went from 200-plus shows a year to 10 shows a year, and that was enough for me at that point," Plume explains. "When you start to get lost in thought when you're playing on stage, you start thinking, like what's on TV tonight, you know? Like you know what? Maybe I'm phoning this one in, and I'm not doing anybody any favours."

**IT TURNED OUT**, though, that music was a tough habit to break, and Plume and the band managed to get together for a few shows over the last six years, including one during Ottawa's celebration of Alberta's centennial.

It wasn't until this year, however, that the guys started talking more seriously about the Mike Plume Band. The band went down to Nashville, where Plume now lives, to rehearse. They started talking about touring Europe. Not only that but they'd go with new music in hand. They recorded an album, due out in the New Year, and have set out for a reunion tour of Western Canada.

In the bio Plume has sent out, he writes, "I never thought I'd be at this point again. I never thought I cared this much about it."

"I was wrong."

And all of the band's fans say, "Here's to well-deserved rest." ♡

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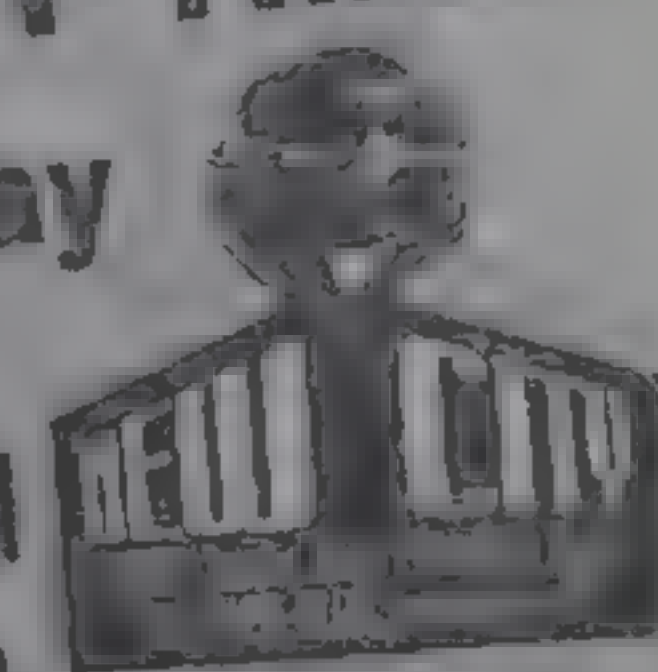
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- OCT 3 - Raygun Cowboys CD Release Party
- OCT 10 - The MAHONES w/ Panik Attack
- OCT 17 - SNUFU/Mr. Plow/Mad Cowboys



# Stealing for fun

BRYAN BIRCHES / bryand@vancouverweekly.com

While other band members worry about overexposing themselves in their hometown, local cramp-rockers **40 Thieves** have no such preoccupations. Instead, the band can be found nearly every weekend honing its considerable skills on one stage or another, whether the audience numbers in the hundreds or the singles. But why? It turns out, the band needs the practice.

"We haven't had a solid jam spot in about six months because of the state of any rehearsal space in the city," laments bassist and vocalist Lee Klippenstein. "We got a house so that we could jam in it."

The recent move of Klippenstein and guitarist Caleb Neumeier into a house of their own (drummer Grant

PREVIEW

SUN, AUG 31 (2 PM)

**40 THIEVES**

WIGHT PLO HAM, WICKED AND SHARP, PATE MOUTH LIGHTS, ELECTRICITY FOR EVERYBODY, FAT DAVE

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE, FREE

Callaghan lives elsewhere) may have allowed the band to have a jam space of their own for the first time in months, but it brought with it some new problems. Although noise complaints were never a big deal when they were begging friends to let them come over and jam, in their new abode the neighbours seem a little sensitive.

"We've probably jammed three times in the basement. Two of those times we finished at 9:30 or 10 o'clock and we've got complaints to our landlord," Klippenstein says, mentioning

that their landlord has been pretty cool about the situation. "We've sound proofed it a little bit better and we're gonna give it another go, but

it's even hairy jamming down there right now—story of the Thieves!"

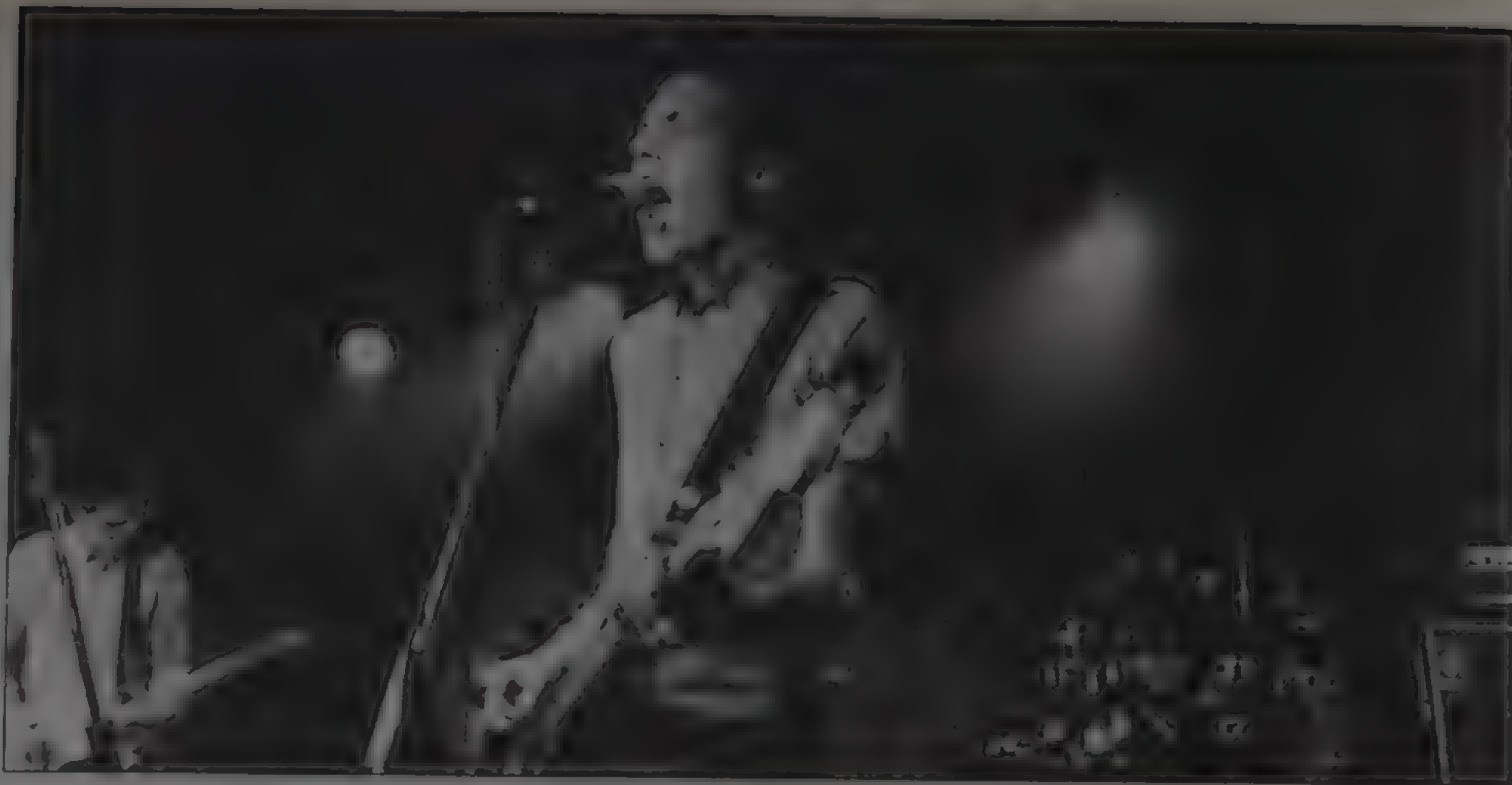
Another reason why the band plays so much is because, well, they like it. To that end, the band loves to go on tour and play in new places. Although they all have jobs in order to pay the bills, the band is constantly on weekend trips around the province and into BC, where they play to have fun without much thought of how touring can further their career in "the biz."

"It's 90 per cent for just shits and giggles. It's good exposure I guess to get yourself out to other cities, but the real reason for me is just because it's fun as hell," Klippenstein laughs. "The

last tour we went on with Sailor's Blood from Victoria was pretty entertaining. We woke up on the beach in the Okanagan, just shit like that—typical tour stuff."

Maybe waking up on a beach is typical tour stuff, but 40 Thieves is also all about extreme situations when they hit the road. So much so that the band is planning a trip to Toronto and back in—seriously—December.

"We're gonna brave the elements and the shield—we've built ourselves ample drive days through that shit, and we're gonna take it slow. We'll see how it goes. It's a risk but we're willing to take it." ▽



## Lagwagon

WITH GUESTS

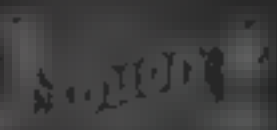
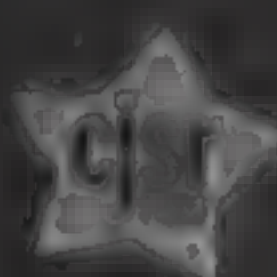
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# Airbourne jet-setting across the world

LEWIS KELLY / lewis@vancouverweekly.com

Though Ryan O'Keeffe will shortly be paid to play the drums in front of thousands of appreciative Quebeckers, the Australian's voice sounds tired.

O'Keeffe and the other three members of Airbourne are in Montréal to continue their high-perpetual touring in support of their latest record, *Running Wild*. For how long, exactly, has the band been on tour?

"Since forever. Since last year we've been flat out," says O'Keeffe. "We did all through December, Christmas, and then all through January and then first of February we were in the States."

Still, O'Keeffe denies that the band is bored or tired.

"No, no, we love touring," he explains. "This is what we really like doing."

Airbourne's rigorous touring schedule has seen them mostly bouncing between America, the United Kingdom, and mainland Europe, but it also included a visit to Canada four months ago. Apparently, the fact that you can buy Australian beer here has something to do with the band's speedy return.

"Well, we've drank quite a lot of it already," explains O'Keeffe. "You can actually get Australian beer over here. You can't get it in America. We don't drink Fosters."

The fact that Canada and Australia are somewhat similar probably didn't hurt matters any.

"It's not really that much different, you know," says O'Keeffe. "Everyone's nice. It does remind me a bit of Australia. Good people, good times, lot of beers."

But apart from all this, the band's record sales in Canada have recently taken off in a big way. This obviously raises the question of why.

**PREVIEW** FRI, AUG 29 (8 PM)  
**AIRBOURNE**  
WITH GUESTS  
EDMONTON EVENTS CENTRE 20210

"Canadians have always loved their rock and roll. The reception we've had has been terrific," ventures O'Keeffe. "It's good to see Canada rocks."

As a four-piece classic rock band from Australia, Airbourne is inevitably likened to another rockin' quartet from Down Under. It is impossible not to hear AC/DC echoed in the 4/4 drumming, bluesy guitar licks, and straightforward, blue collar lyrics of Airbourne. Their hair is even the same length. The only thing Airbourne is missing is a school uniform for its front man and lead guitarist, Ryan's brother Joel. Still, according to Ryan, the band welcomes the comparisons.

"It's an honour," he says. "Every band is compared to somebody, and they're one of the best in the world, especially when it comes to rock and roll. And we're a rock and roll band too, so it's great to be compared to one of the best rock and roll bands in the world."

While Airbourne certainly sounds like a blast from the past, O'Keeffe sees the classic rock sound of the '70s and '80s as timeless.

"For us, it never really left," he says. "It's just the way we see rock and roll played. It's just the way we've always wanted to play it. From day one we've always played that kind of sound."

And though Airbourne is still a fairly young band—O'Keeffe is just 22—their drummer doubts that their sound will change much over the years.

"This is the way we've always played, ever since we were kids, and the way we'll always play," says O'Keeffe. "It's the way we see how rock and roll should be played." ▽

## JCL BRENT OLIVER BOP & JCL PRESENTS:

WED SEPT 3 PAWNSHOP  
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KRISTINA DE GUZMAN / kristina@vuweekly.com

Randi Lewis Bailer is a philosopher of sorts. The singer-songwriter/guitarist of local act Screwtape Lewis, for one thing, is interested in the relationship between art and reality. Bailer experienced a case of "life imitating art" when his band had to push the release of their fourth record, *Finding Ways to selfDestruct*, back for more than a year because the hard drive containing all the band's work crunched and some self-destructing of its own.

Bailer, however, chalks everything up to "bizarre coincidence."

"If we were to make record number five, it would be called *Finding Ways to be Completely Successful* or something like that—jinx yourself in a positive way," Bailer jokes.

In reality, the band has actually experienced a number of successes. When *The Opulent Hum* was released in 2005, the band was chosen as Sonic's Band of the Month and its songs even gained airplay in Europe. While Bailer celebrates, he still reflects on the state of the music industry including that of radio.

"There's not a whole lot out there [on the radio] that interests me," admits Bailer, who would rather play various mixed CDs in the car than listen to the radio. "I feel that there are some trends that just keep lasting."

"A couple of us were driving the other day and the radio was on and I kept saying, 'Is this Nickelback?' and the driver would say, 'Oh, no, this is ...'—whatever band. Then the next one would come on and I would say, 'Well, this is Nickelback, right?' and they'd say, 'Well ... no.' I couldn't tell the difference because there were at least three bands that sounded to me just like Nickelback."

Aside from the Hanna rockers, Alberta is known for many things—including being the Canadian equivalent of

Texas. Bailer agrees that there is some truth to the stereotype.

"In pockets of Alberta, there is some amazing intolerance towards everything from race to homosexuality and they're easily 30 years behind the times in their thinking and in their acceptance of people that are considered different. You don't want make a generalization and say, 'Well, all Albertans are like that,' because obviously, they're not. I think it's a small number that makes it bad for everyone else in the province. Being a musician in Alberta all these years, there's no doubt that I've seen it up close and personal. They have to change. We can't embrace that sort of narrow thinking."

A week spent in Cuba earlier this summer also leads Bailer to reflect on how the attitudes of people there varied from those living at home.

"I guess one of the things that really struck me there is how little the people have as far as things [such as] technology," says Bailer. "You don't see very many people with MP3s or cell phones or laptops."

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Bailer confesses to holding an assumption that scarcity automatically means a dog-eat-dog attitude, but he instead discovered that the opposite occurs in Cuba, where people tend to band together despite living in poverty.

"[I was] talking with one of the guides and she said, 'I think it's in Havana, where they have two murders a year'—like, 'I'm embarrassed!' And you could see it on her face. She just sort of grimaces, 'Ohh ... I wouldn't want to go to Canada,'" says

Bailer, referring to Edmonton's 18 homicides this year to date.

"Anytime I travel, I feel like I learn a little bit more about my own country and how things are and where things are going. I think a lot about this disappearance of communities. When community starts to disappear, I think it's a dangerous thing. So it makes me wonder as an artist or as a musician, how can we use the arts to embrace community rather than to break it down?" ▼



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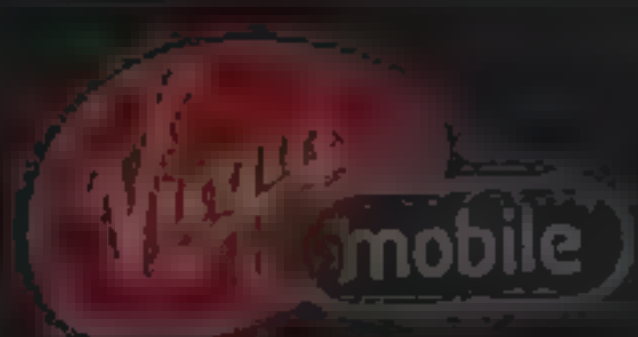
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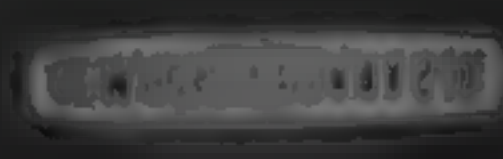
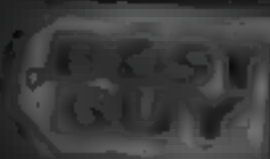
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BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vancouver.com

Reputations—positive ones at least—are a double edged sword. On the one hand, it can be a good thing that people you meet know something about you already, or at least know what to expect. On the other hand, if you don't live up to your reputation, you risk being a disappointment.

Such would seem to be the conundrum of the Real McKenzies. Known as a hard-drinking band of Scottish punk rockers, the members are expected to show up half-soused to whatever gig they're playing. And once they get there, they're expected to get fully-soused. Having been around for over 14 years, however, the band couldn't be expected to do that every night, could it?

"It's one of those things that you

perpetuate by, in the right time and the right place, you knock down a half a bottle of whiskey and drink a case of beer within a half-hour or an hour. The reality of it is that if you did that 24 hours a day you'd be dead before you know it," vocalist Paul McKenzie explains. "These sort of depictions tend to perpetuate themselves—all you need is a little kick and a little fire and away you go."

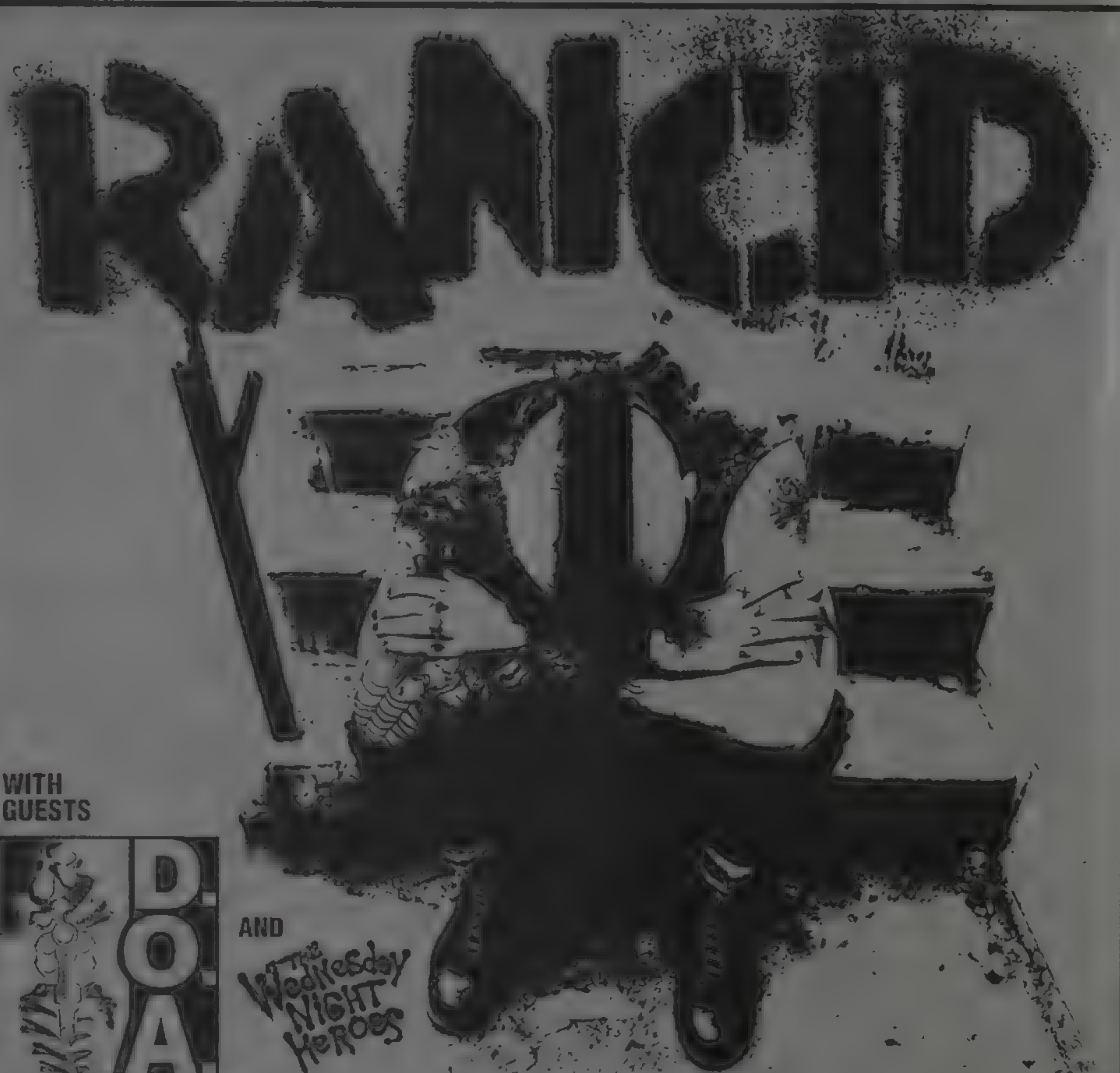
That fire hasn't always come in handy for McKenzie, however, as on a recent tour of Europe the singer paid dearly for some of the liquid courage that booze had provided him—he took a bottle to the face after teasing the audience.

"Normally I see them go to my right or my left, but this one came right down the centre and got me," he says. "I probably egged them on. We got there early and started drinking, and I think I might have said the wrong thing at the wrong time. These Croats, they're very very passionate. I think I

was bugging them about losing at soccer, and they take it 10 times as seriously as I do. Next time I'll bug 'em about something else, like the war or something."

Tour stories like that often make their way into the albums the Real McKenzies record and release, but a fair amount of traditional songs and stories from Celtic culture do as well. Tapping into the long line of Celtic storytellers by resurrecting these traditional songs and presenting them to a new audience fills McKenzie with a significant amount of pride.

"If you look at all the legend and stories and music involved with the Scottish Celts, the Irish Celts and the Celts themselves as they came across Europe, it's a well I could never empty," he says. "In my lifetime if I can take a cup of it and record it it would be an unnatural feat—there's just so much of it. To take a small fraction of that is an honour." v



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## THE CITY STREETS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

WHILE IT'S REID who generally brings a song to the others, he's quick to point out that it's usually little more than a melody with some words and chords, and the song only becomes a City Streets tune once bassist Matt Leddy and drummer Mark Chmilar have had their way with it. Of course, just like getting the album out, the songwriting process doesn't always happen particularly quickly.

"I usually don't have much of an idea and that's kind of the fun [of putting the songs together]," Reid laughs. "Sometimes we're working on a song for months and months and do, like, eight different versions, and sometimes it just comes together."

"There'll even be parts where he's got the song and we'll try it a bunch of different ways, but we might get stuck for a week wondering what to do with these four bars to make it where we want it to be," adds Leddy.

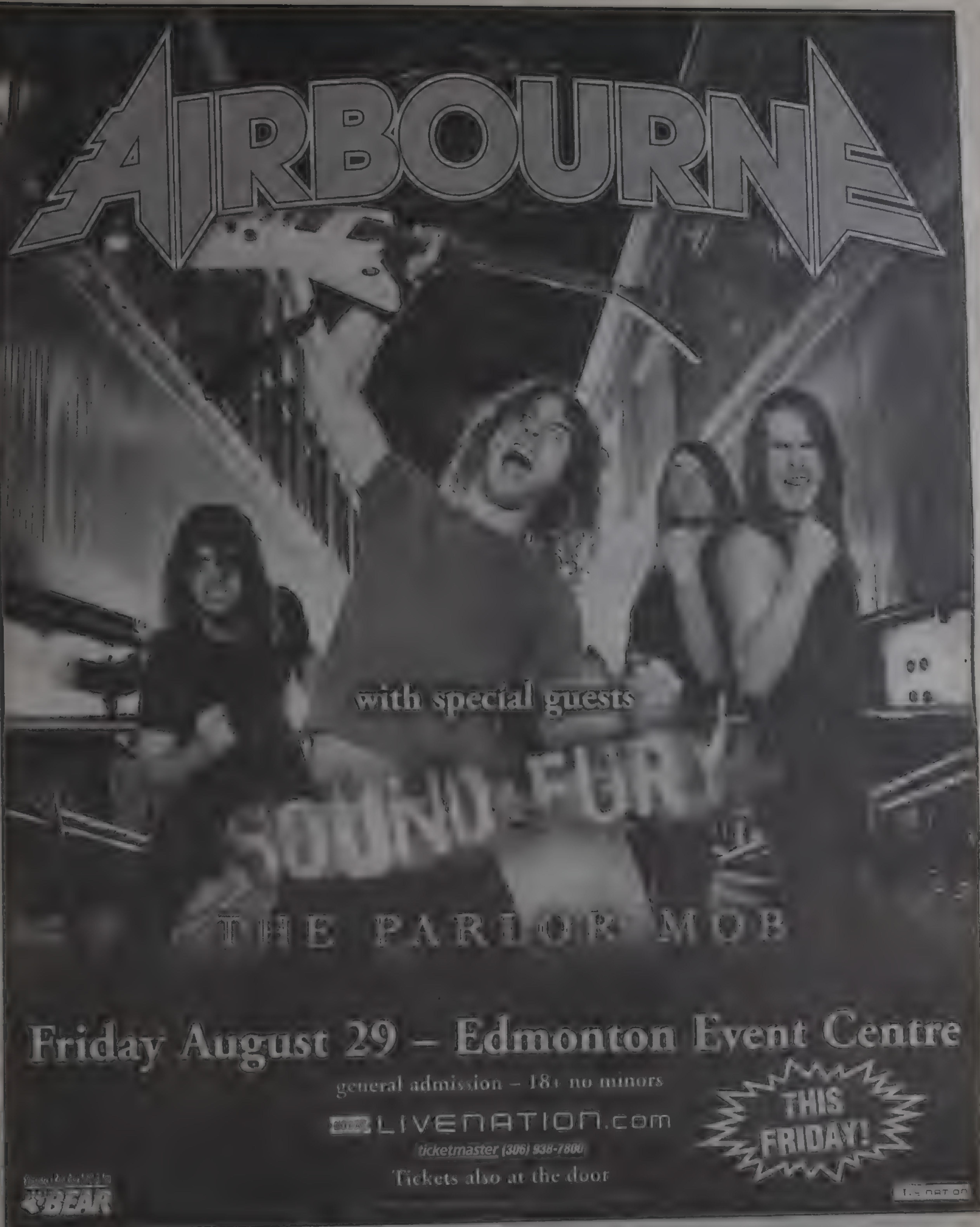
"We can be pretty self-critical at times, too," laughs Chmilar. "If something's not sounding right, we'll let the other person know."

For the City Streets, creation is something that is ongoing; there's no one "finished" version of a tune as the songs constantly change shape, sometimes in obvious ways, sometimes much more subtly as the band works them over on the stage long after they've been recorded in one version or another.

"You take certain songs on the road and just by testing them or whatever there are certain parts that you just naturally play louder," explains Leddy. "So the song even changes while you're on the road and by the time you get back you're ready for a remix."

"There are songs off our first record now that we play a lot different live because they just grow over time," Reid agrees. "It's not like a song is the way it is, but we work on it to get to the point that we like it and then it hopefully evolves."

"That was the nice thing about *Concentrated Living* compared to [previous album] *These Things Happen*," Chmilar adds. "*These Things Happen*, we just started the band and recorded an album after three months, but this one we had these songs—some of them for a year or two years—and they'd been tested on the road so you had that better feel, you had the better dynamic range. There are things that come together on the road that you can't get in the basement, which I think really helped the album." ▽



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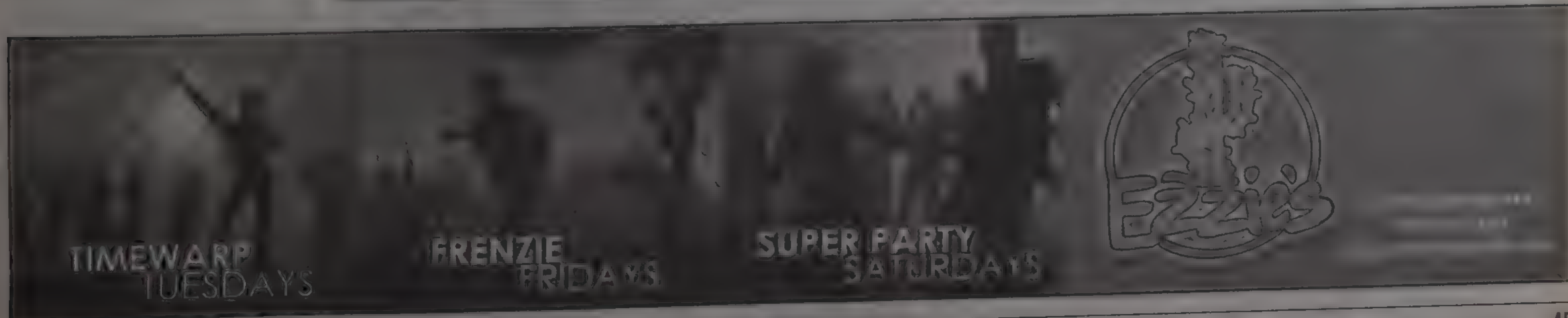
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**AIDS Wolf, Cities of Glass (SKIN GRAFT)** In avant-garde composer John Cage's collection of lectures and writings, which he cheekily titled Silence, he wrote, "Wherever we are, what we hear is mostly noise. When we ignore it, it disturbs us. When we listen to it, we find it fascinating."

Montreal's AIDS Wolf are disturbing and fascinating. Their twisted guitars, strings scraping and being bent into submission, their seemingly random drum bashing, and the screeching. Oh the screeching.

Their sound is as if they are trying to chase you away, which in a way they are. It's not for the faint of heart, and it's certainly not for everyone. Albums like this are seemingly a bit of a gamble, but it's us or against us?

Them" attitude inherent in a lot of noise rock brings up an interesting point about how musical subculture, and the perception of those subcultures, influences the tastes of an individual. AIDS Wolf are obviously "cool" people; they play in a band that erupted during the Montréal indie explosion, their members create some of the coolest show posters around for SeriPop, and they tour the world playing what is essentially noise for kids-as cool as them. Someone who wants to feel as if they're at the forefront of the avant-garde, to feel as if they are privy to the secrets of the newest thing, might latch onto noise rock or AIDS Wolf.

But I think that this criticism dismisses the musicality of this record. While I'm sure there are some people

who put an AIDS Wolf (or a Wolf Eyes, or a Can, or a Locust) record on their shelf after listening to it once and consider themselves full members of whatever sub culture they imagined they were joining, I don't think you can dismiss the ideas inherent in the music AIDS Wolf makes just because some people are sheep. All genres have their sheep.

*Cities of Glass* is dense and, at times, frustrating—but it's not as if you can't dance to it. It'll be a complicated little dance, to be sure, but there's a beat, there's some semblance of melody, these are not songs that have no structure, there is something to latch onto—something that is sometimes a little tenuous and fleeting, but it gets you going in the mind. *Cities of Glass* is not about

drinking beers on the patio or shaking your ass at a club, it's about thinking about what the essence of music is, and pushing yourself to open up to a new definition. Getting past the screeching, the dense guitar sounds that seem like they are just feedback and scraping, and that seemingly random drumming will provide the dedicated listener with a reward. The reward of this album is the way it changes your thinking, the way it makes you realize that music can still be dangerous and can still confound the squares. While the original noisy thrust of punk rock has been commodified, AIDS Wolf feels like a pure barrage that could never be. This is alone music, not something for your makeout mixtape. —BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vuweekly.com

**Alice Cooper, Along Came a Spider (SPV)** The Coop is at it again—after the throwback to garage rock of the original Alice Cooper group on his last album, this time out he's throwing it back to the first solo Alice Cooper albums, taking a twisted storyline

and running with it. Back then he was welcoming us to his nightmares and taking us on trips into hell; now, the record centres around a serial killer named Spider. The best moments are the ones where Cooper and his band sound like they're back in the garage, laying down sloppy, raunchy riffs like on "I Know Where You Live" or going from gentle piano to epic ballad on "Salvation." Unfortunately, there's a lot of sludgy modern metal filling in the cracks here. Plus, Cooper's story this time out seems more downright mean than the darkly humorous approaches he's taken in the past. There is a twist at the end that tries to put a new spin on the record, but it comes across as a gimmick that is too little too late. —EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuweekly.com

**The Creepshow, Run For Your Life (Stomp)** With the body of a rockabilly record and a bolted-on head straight out of a 1950s horror flick, the Creepshow's *Run For Your Life* is a bizarre, shambling monster of a record. Like *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, it might not be very smart, but it is a ton of fun. It does get a little monotone at times as the band has a restricted sonic palette, but this is mitigated by the playfully macabre tone of the record and its brevity. A strange and wonderful mongrel, *Run For Your Life* makes you want to do anything but. —LEWIS KELLY / lewis@vuweekly.com

*The Creepshow will be creepin' 'round the Starlite Room on Wed, Aug 3.*

**DJ Nana, The World Inside My Head, Vol 3 (Urbnet)** On his first track, DJ Nana introduces this record to lovers of all genres of music. What he shows us next is that hip hop is and can be just as diverse as rock music. One track is sparse in beats giving off an ethereal sound ("Intro-Welcome to Nanaland") while the next consists of heavy beats that would it good video game background music ("Motorcity Vibin"). Then there's a track intro powered by organ chords which are held in a minor key ("Eighties Babies, Stay Fly!") making it a solid track to choose for the haunted house you plan to make next Halloween while another track could easily be on a K-Os record ("I chill" ft/ Luke F.O.R.C.E.). While the styles often vary to the point of feeling like you're in a bumper car and being jerked momentarily as you hit other cars, the tracks on their own are so fresh and innovative that minor imperfections like faulty track flow can be forgotten. —KRISTINA DE GUZMAN / kristina@vuweekly.com

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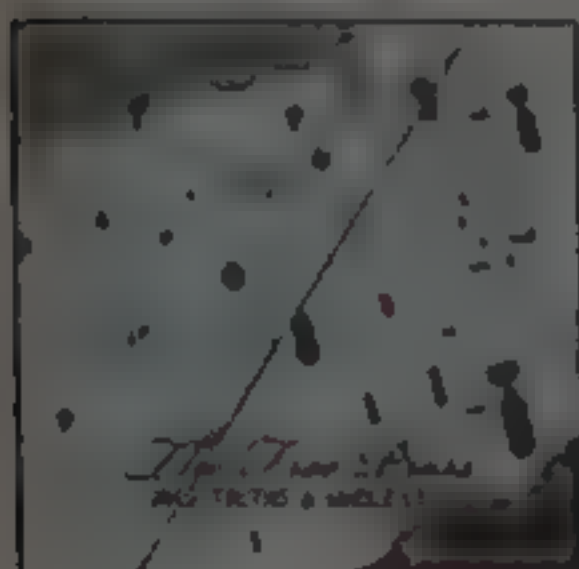
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**The Free Press, Half Truths & Whole Lies** (tfp) With lyrics like "All in the name of God and love," you would



think that the Free Press is trying to mirror U2. Instead, it sounds more like the current Journey.

Alex Oliveira's powerful, high-range

vocals, containing just the right amount of rough, make these pop songs more than just pop songs. They're pop songs that bring in a certain amount of intensity due to the fact that flat vocals are not belting out the lyrics. Highlights include the guitar solo and bridge of "It's Killing Me That it's Killing You" and the fast vocal work and dissonant piano chords of "Stop the War." Meanwhile, "The Only Way Home" sounds like Hawksley Workman singing a Beatles song. As the album progresses, there are tracks like "The Beginning of the End of the World" which could have easily been written by Sam Roberts. Aside from a couple of bland tracks like "Neverland" and "Dirty Little Secrets," pop rock hasn't sound this good in a while. —KRISTINA DE GUZMAN / kristina@vueweekly.com

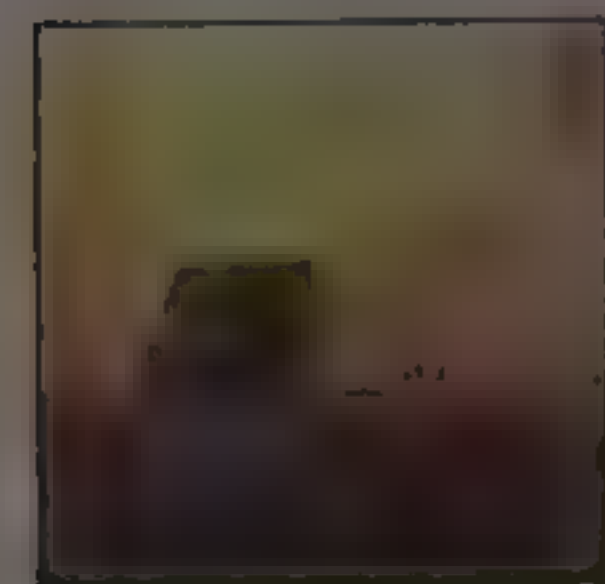
**The Green Hour Band, The Green Hour Band** (Kingdom Records) I suppose if any Canadian city were to produce a band that would answer



Jefferson Airplane's dare to "feed your head" and follow the White Rabbit down the psychedelic hole, it'd be Vancouver. But

bathed in the glow of the Aurora Borealis and the 21st century, the Green Hour Band, despite liberal use of spidery sitar, has more of a hoser heart than a hippie one. There's some serious nostalgia bluesy dirty rock—and wailing harmonica—underneath the fuzzy jangle of guitars and noodly vintage organ, reaching back further into the '60s than psych, back to the roots of the British invasion. Then they underpin the whole frenzy with bell-clear bass, throbbing like a glam rock hangover. Green Hour simply dig loud, sweaty, far-out music and they play it with gusto and without pretension. —MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vueweekly.com

**Various Artists, Saved by Saskatoon (Saved By Radio)** Of course this record is great. I've always had a bit of a soft spot for Saskatoon as a city and



if you've ever watched live music there you know their scene is as interesting and dynamic as ours, but maybe a little smaller. I guess the

same could be said about the city itself. Anyways, it's always impossible to review a "various artists" type of compilation, especially when it is site specific because then it isn't based on any particular musical criteria, but on location. All of the songs are different, and all are the best Saskatoon has to offer. I couldn't imagine the process of choosing who would and wouldn't be on the album, it must have been hard.

—BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vueweekly.com

## MUSIC OLD SOUNDS

**The Clash, Cut the Crap** (Epic) Originally released: 1985 For the Clash, the three years between the release of *Combat Rock*, the band's fifth album and its fourth and last with the lineup of Joe Strummer, Paul Simonon, Mick Jones and Topper Headon, and *Cut the Crap*, the final Clash album, was a period marked by the slow disintegration of the band and Strummer and Simonon's attempts to keep the ship upright. Singer/guitarist Strummer and bassist Simonon were the sole holdovers at this point from the band's earlier years after the dismissal of first drummer Headon and then guitarist Jones.



Replacements for the absent members were brought in—on drums, Terry Chimes, who played on the band's debut, was first, followed by Pete Howard, and on guitars were Nick Sheppard and Vince White—and Strummer led the band on, loudly and angrily proclaiming that the group was as strong as ever.

It's not impossible to believe that there was a chance for the Clash to reinvent itself as a second, artistically viable entity; prior to the release of *Cut the Crap*, the band set out on a bus tour of the UK, which might have been an opportunity for the band to solidify into a united front.

In the studio, however, there was

little unity as Strummer and manager Bernie Rhodes took control of the sessions, keeping the participation of the other band members at a minimum. The result is an album that shows glimpses of what might have been—Strummer's songs are there, but they're buried deep beneath layers of sounds that ultimately feel pasted together.

The primary percussion sound that's heard on *Cut the Crap* is that of a drum machine, and there are guitars everywhere which sound planned out,

thoughtfully placed here and there within the mix rather than flying fast and furiously as they did when it was Jones who was chopping at the strings.

In light of the fractured recording sessions that led to the album's creation, it's funny now to listen back

to Strummer's defiant claims on "We are the Clash," where he sings, "We ain't gonna be treated like trash / We got one thing / We are the Clash / That's right / We are the Clash / It's like a patch / You can strike that match."

Looking back, it seems obvious now that this band was not the Clash, but rather some sort of misguided project with Strummer and Rhodes fighting for control in the wake of the dissolution of the original band.

In the years that followed *Cut the Crap*, Strummer came around to essentially calling bullshit on himself, admitting that it was a dishonest venture trying to create a new band out of the ashes of the old. ▼

## HAIKU! QUICK SPINS

WHITE HOUSTON  
quickspins@vueweekly.com

EMEL RYAN  
(UNIVERSAL)  
FUCKING TERRIBLE!  
New low from Disney's latest  
Cartoon character

ICE CUBE  
RAW FOOTAGE  
(IMP)  
Street cred at zero  
As disc nears end I'm thinkin'  
Are we there yet?

V/A  
THESE TIMES  
(REALTALK)  
Oh wow! How ballsy!  
Old timers sing protest songs  
Demand kids off lawn!

JET BLACK STARE  
IN THIS LIFE  
(ISLAND)  
These candyasses  
Have two songs; one fast, one slow  
And both made me barf

RYAN NEULSON  
FOUR WALLS  
(INDEPENDENT)  
Heartfelt rootsy pop  
Fans of John Mayer will think  
How is this legal?

BLONDE O  
STUMBORN  
(MULATTA)  
I love French singers!  
Precious mangling of English  
Is le boner time

WUVERHAND  
TEN STONES  
(SOUNDS FAMILIAR)  
Folk with gravitas!  
Something beguiling about  
This guys plaintive wail

STAND  
THE ILLUSION OF PROGRESS  
(ATLANTIC)  
Waaaay huge anthems dude!!!!  
Whyte Ave meathead soundtrack for  
Beating on strangers

SHWYZE  
SHWYZE  
(SEFFEN)  
Laid back yet sexy  
Perfect disc for trying to  
Fuck in a hammock

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# ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 19)

My Aries friend David's acupuncturist diagnosed his current condition as an "encroachment of phlegm in his triple heater." That's also an apt metaphorical description of what's going on in your psyche. Your internal engine—the fire in your belly—is a bit clogged by a sluggish stream of swampy, snotty feelings. I suggest you take action to purge this creeping effluvia. A good way to start would be to do what Gestalt dream workers do: imagine that the effluvia can speak, and ask it to tell you what it wants.

# TAURUS (APR 20 - MAY 20)

Borrowing some words of poet Eliza Acton and mixing them with mine, I've prepared a love note for you to use as your own. Feel free to give these words to the person whose destiny needs to be woven more closely together with yours. "I love you as a glad bird loves the freedom of its wings. I love you as I love the first lily of spring exploding with clear fragrance in the moonlight. I love you as I love the swell and hush of a low melody that brings the past to life again. I love you as I love the tone of a soft-breathing dawn whose soul has awoken for me alone."

# GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUN 20)

In Greek mythology, the Procrustean bed was a torture device. Anyone foolish enough to lie down on it would be forcibly modified in order to fit its exact dimen-

sions. A person who was smaller than the bed would be painfully stretched and those who were too big would have their body parts amputated. I beg you not to climb into any situation that resembles that bed, Gemini. You need an adaptable niche that will adjust to your unique needs and talents, not a rigid template that squeezes and bullies you into assuming its shape.

# CANCER (JUN 21 - JUL 22)

"Dear Rob the Astrologer: I recently discovered your column, and I like it. But I'm wondering if I'm approaching it in the right way. Although I'm a Crab, all 12 of your horoscopes seem to make sense to me and describe how I feel. Is this OK? —Curious in Austin." Dear Curious: You Cancerians are very versatile and empathetic these days. Given how open you are to being taught from every angle, you have my blessing to glean useful information from the horoscopes for all of the signs. This phenomenon will probably run its course by Sep 23, and after that you may find that only the Cancer horoscope really works for you.

# LEO (JUL 23 - AUG 22)

I'm not so interested in predicting the future as I am in creating the future. Why waste even a minute worrying about how things will turn out when you can devote your energy to making things turn out the way you want? It's true that in the horoscopes I offer you, I speculate about what may be coming. But my purpose in doing so is to describe favorable scenarios that you can use your willpower to manifest. Right now, for instance, I won't prophesy, "You may soon be blessed with a valuable new resource." Rather, I'll say, "Get out there,

Leo, and acquire a tool or fuel or asset that will help you become more practical about fulfilling one of your dreams."

# VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEP 22)

"I have dreamed in my life dreams that have stayed with me ever after, and changed my ideas," wrote Emily Bronte in *Wuthering Heights*. "They have gone through and through me, like wine through water, and altered the colour of my mind." One of your main assignments in the coming week, Virgo, is to identify a dream that can work that kind of magic on you. If there is no such dream currently seeded in your imagination, find a new one to plant there.

# LIBRA (SEP 23 - OCT 22)

"The apocalypse won't be all that bad," Bible scholar Parker Creaston told the *Weekly World News*. There'll be a "brief period of mild to moderate disorder," after which will come an extended period of "worldwide peace and harmony." Similarly, Libra, your fear of impending chaos in your personal sphere will turn out to be overblown. Yes, you may suffer temporary shortages and inconveniences, as well as what we might call a metaphorical "traffic jam." But you can forget about mountains of fire, seas of blood, and hordes of locusts from the bottomless pit. They will definitely not be showing up.

# SCORPIO (OCT 23 - NOV 21)

You've reached a phase in your astrological cycle when you have special power to expand, deepen, and enhance your web of allies. My advice? Don't just schmooze and party, but rather schmooze and party with an evangelical sense of purpose, taking advantage of the fact that people are more likely than usual to see you as attractive,

be sympathetic to your cause, and lend you their support. The connections you forge and the synergetic collaborations you ignite in the next three weeks could be major factors in your success in 2009.

# SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 - DEC 21)

According to the Guinness World Records website, the world record for opera singers receiving curtain calls is Luciano Pavarotti, who got 165 after his 1988 show at the Deutsche Opera in Berlin. If that mark is ever broken, it may soon be accomplished by a Sagittarian performer. That's because you people will be at the peak of your potential to garner acknowledgement, recognition, and rewards in your chosen field. Here's a secret about how you can take maximum advantage of that potential: imagine that there is a higher, finer level of excellence that's beyond what you've understood as excellence up until now. Then figure out what you'd have to do to rise to that higher, finer level.

# CAPRICORN (DEC 22 - JAN 19)

Below is an excerpt from a Charles Baudelaire poem, as translated by Louis Simpson. "Ask the wind, the wave, the star, the bird, the clock, everything that is flying; everything that is groaning, everything that is rolling, everything that is singing, everything that is speaking ... ask what time it is, and wind, wave, star, bird, clock will answer you: 'It is time to be drunk! So as not to be the martyred slaves of time, be drunk, be continually drunk! On wine, on poetry or on virtue as you wish.'" It is a perfect time in your astrological cycle to draw inspiration from that counsel, Capricorn. In addition to wine, poetry and virtue, consider trying anything else that might

work to achieve the desired exaltation, like meditation, dancing, sex, dream work or a vision quest.

# AQUARIUS (JAN 20 - FEB 18)

Thanks for the entertainment you've provided so far in 2008, Aquarius. Since last January, you have sent a nagging demon packing and corrected a kink in your integrity. You've paid off a load of karmic debt left over from the old days and have even begun to dissolve an outdated psychosexual imprint. Before I announce your reward for all this good work, though, I'd like you to make more progress on tempering your obsessive side. See what you can do to convert it from a part-time liability into a full-time asset.

# PISCES (FEB 19 - MAR 20)

"The real secret of magic is that the world is made of words," said the sage Terence McKenna, "and that if you know the words that the world is made of, you can make of it whatever you wish." I'd go even further and say that you can actually shape your world through your use of language. Do you really want to live amidst infertile chaos where nothing makes sense and no one really loves anyone? Then speak with unconscious carelessness, expressing yourself lazily. Or would you prefer to live in a realm that's rich with meaning and beauty and interesting mystery? Then be discerning and creative in how you speak, primed to name the novel truths that are always being born right in front of your eyes. Of course you always have the power to create heaven or hell through the words you choose, Pisces, but right now is a potential turning point when you could form good new habits. ▾

## VUEWEEKLY

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## CLUBS/LECTURES

**AUTISM SPEAKS CANADA** St. Albert Place, Lion's Park, St. Albert • Inaugural Edmonton Capital Region 3 km Walk for Autism featuring music, entertainment, and an Autism resource Fair • Sun, Sept. 7, Registration 8:30-10am • Info/registration: 888.362.6227 or www.walknow-forautism.org/edmonton

**AWA 12-STEP SUPPORT GROUP** Braeside Presbyterian Church basement, N. door, 6 Bernard Dr. Bishop St, Sir Winston Churchill Ave, St. Albert • For adult children of alcoholic and dysfunctional families • Meet every Mon including holidays (7:30pm)

**CANADIAN GRANDMOTHERS RALLY** (780-988-8392) • To fight HIV and AIDS in Africa, grandmothers and others will hang out dirty laundry at the Gazebo in Old Strathcona Park to bring attention to broken promises made by the Government of Canada • Sept. 6 (10am-2pm)

**CANADIAN NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE** 11205-101 St (780-479-1999) • Basketball; Mon (5-7pm) • Healing Circle; Mon (6-8pm) • Boxing; Mon/Thu (7-9pm), Tue (5-7pm) • Volleyball; Tue (6-8pm) • Sewing Circle; Tue (6-8pm) • Beadwork Class; Wed (6-8pm) • C.N.F.C. Pow-wow; Wed (6-9pm) • Hip-Hop Class; every Thu (5-7pm) • Cree Class; Thu (6-8pm) • Elders and Residency; Fri (all day) • Safe Using and Harm Reduction; last Fri every month (11am-12pm) • Tobacco Reduction; every Fri (1-2pm) • Drop-in Night; Fri (6-8pm)

**DECREASE STRESS/IMPROVE HEALTH** 12520-135 Ave (780-451-9535) • Free meditation course and orientation • Sat, Sept. 6 (1-3pm); course starting Mon, Sept. 8 (7pm); www.willpowerinstitute.com

**DYNAMICS OF HIV/AIDS** HIV Edmonton, 300, 11456 Jasper Ave, www.hivedmonton.com (780-488-5742, ext. 229) • Learn about HIV/AIDS, harm reduction, Hepatitis C, viral-replication cycle, treatment side effects, local/global issues, determinants of health and human rights. 2 day free workshop. Includes a light lunch • Sept. 4-5; contact Jen at HIV Edmonton, pre-register by Aug. 29

**EDMONTON911TRUTH, EDMONTON QUESTIONS 911** Stanley A. Milner Library Theatre, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Sq • Two speakers will present lectures and a film will be shown with some of the latest presentations on alternate 9-11 theories • Sat, Sept. 6 (1-5pm) • \$16.50 (adv)/\$15 (door)

**FREE YOGA** Lululemon Athletica Kingsway security entrance 2 (780-471-1200) • All levels welcome, new styles each week, mats provided • Every Sun (6-7pm)

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS AT THE WILLPOWER INSTITUTE** 12520-135 Ave (780-459-0470/780-451-9535) • Free meditation course (decrease stress-improve health) • Orientation session: Sat, Sept. 6 (1pm)

**IMAGES ALBERTA CAMERA CLUB** Pleasantview Community Hall, 10860-57 Ave (780-469-9776/780-452-6224/780-962-6561) • Featuring presentations, speakers, workshops, outings, and competitions. All levels of photographers welcome • Meet the 2nd and 4th Thu each month; Sept-May (8pm); www.imagesab.com

**INTUITIVE YOGA-IN THE PARK** Grant Notley Park, 11603-100 Ave (780-909-9355) • For all ages, levels, genders, practice in the park (depends on weather), with Tamra • Mon-Thu (6:30-7:15am); Wed only at Grandin Park-LRT (5:45-7:00pm); Sun (10:45am-12pm) • \$10 donation

**LIVING WITH LOSS** Strathcona Place, 10831 University Ave • Presentation on grieving • Wed, Sept. 3 (10am-noon) • Pre-register at 780-4541231, ext 224

**MEDITATION • Gaden Samten Ling Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Society** 11403-101 St (780-479-0014) www.gadensamtenling.org; Kushok Lobsang Dhamchoe; beginner Tue (7pm); intermediate Wed (7pm); advanced Sun (11am-1pm) • **Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization**, 208, 10132-105 St (780-425-1050) www.bkwsu.org; Raja Yoga Meditation • **Meditation and Buddhist practices** 10502-70 Ave, www.karmatashiling.ca (780-633-6157) with Tibetan tradition Lama Ani Kunsang. Beginners welcome, instruction available; free; Wed (7pm)

**MEDITATION: BENEFITTING DAILY LIFE** Korean Buddhist Temple, 10155-89 St (780-633-6157) • Public talk by Damcho Rinpoche, Tibetan tradition meditation master and teacher • Fri, Aug. 29 (7pm) • \$10 (donation); www.karmatashiling.ca

**OIL ON WATER** Stanley A. Milner Library Theatre 7 Sir Winston Churchill Sq (780-428-2465) • Edmonton film premier • Aug. 30-31 (7pm) discussion to follow • Free (donations welcomed)

**TAOIST TAI CHI SOCIETY** Butler Park, 15715 Stony Plain Rd (780-489-4293) • Tai Chi awareness

day featuring demonstrations and a free introductory class • Sat, Sept. 6 (1:30pm)

**TOASTMASTERS CLUBS • Chamber Toastmasters Club:** Chamber of Commerce, 600, 9990 Jasper Ave (780-459-5206); Thu (6pm) • **MacEwan:** Grant MacEwan College, Rm 5-238, 10700-104 Ave (780-633-3921); Fri (noon-1pm) • **N'Orators Toastmasters Club:** Londonderry Public Library www.norators.com; Wed (7-8:45pm) • **Power Speakers:** Grant MacEwan Centre for the Arts, Rm 437, 10045-156 St (780-459-0642); Wed (7-9pm) • **Pursuers:** Best Western Cedar Park Inn, 5116 Gateway Boulevard (780-457-0808); Wed (7-9pm) • **Chanticleer:** Kingsway Rm, Millard Health Building, 131 Airport Rd (780-498-4608/474-1138) Thu (7-8:30am)

**WOMEN IN BLACK** In front of the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market • Silent vigil the 1st and 3rd Sat (10-11am) every month, stand in silence for a world without violence

## QUEER LISTINGS

**AFFIRM SUNNYBROOK-RED DEER** Sunnybrook United Church, Red Deer (403-347-6073) • Affirm welcome LGBTQ people and their friends, family, and allies meet the 2nd Tue (7pm) every month

**BUDDYS NITE CLUB** 117258 Jasper Ave 780-488-7736) • Open nightly 9pm-3am, Fri 8pm-3pm • Sun: Rotating drag shows with Mz Bianca and Mz Vanity Fair in The Stardust Lounge and GoDivya and Donatella NE1 in The GoDonna Show, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Mon: Amateur strip contest with Mia Fellow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Tue: Free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser • Wed: Hump day with DJ Sexxy Sean • Thu: Wet underwear contest with Mia Fellow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Fri: We made 'em famous! DJ Eddy Toonflash, come early to avoid lineup, no cover before 10pm • Sat: Undie night for men only, free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser

**EDMONTON PRIME TIMERS (EPT)** Unitarian Church of Edmonton, 10804-119 St • A group of older gay men and their admirers who have common social interests meet the 2nd Sun (2:30pm) of most months for a social period, a short meeting and a guest speaker, discussion panel or a potluck supper. Special interest groups meet for other social activities throughout the month. email edmontonpt@yahoo.ca, www.primetimerswww.org/edmonton

**GLBT SPORTS AND RECREATION** www.teamedmonton.ca • Women's Drop-In Recreational Badminton; Oliver School Gym, 10227-118 St (780-465-3620); Wed (6-7:30pm) • Bootcamp; St. Alphonsus, 11624-81 St; Mon (7-8pm); bootcamp@teamedmonton.ca • Bowling; Gateway Lanes, 100 3414 Gateway Blvd; Sat (5-7pm); bowling@teamedmonton.ca • Running; Sun, Tue, Thu; running@teamedmonton.ca • Swimming; NAIT pool, 11762-106 St; Tue (8-9pm), Thu (7:30-8:30pm); swimming@teamedmonton.ca • Volleyball; 101 Amiskwicacy Academy, Municipal Airport Terminal just off Kingsway; Wed recreation (8-10pm); recvolleyball@teamedmonton.ca; Thu Intermediate; volleybal@teamedmonton.ca • YOGA (Hatha): Free Lion's Breath Yoga; every Sun (2-3:30pm); yoga@teamedmonton.ca

**ILLUSIONS SOCIAL CLUB** Boots, 10242-106 St (780-387-3343) • Crossdressers, transsexuals, friends and supporters meet 2nd Thu each month http://groups.yahoo.com/group/edmonton\_illusions/

**IMMIGRANT VOICES FROM BRAZIL: LITERATURE AND FILM** HC L-4 U of A Campus • Guest speakers Therezinha Kennedy and Rita Espeschi; film screening of *Erehé krenak* • Part of Brazil Week • Sept. 8 (4pm)

**INSIDE/OUT** U of A Campus • Campus-based organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified and queer (LGBTQ) faculty, graduate student, academic, straight allies and support staff • 3rd Thu every month (fall/winter terms): Speakers Series. Contact Kris (kwell@ualberta.ca)

**LIVING POSITIVE** 404, 10408-124 St, www.edm-livingpositive.ca (1-877-975-9448/780-488-5768) • Providing confidential peer support to people living with HIV • Tue (7-9pm); Support group • Daily drop-in, peer counselling

**MADELEINE SANAM FOUNDATION** Faculté St. Jean, Rm 3-18 (780-490-7332) • Program for HIV-AIDS prevention, treatment and harm reduction in French, English and other African languages • 3rd and 4th Sat (9am-5pm) every month • Free (member/\$10 (membership)) • Pre-register

**MAKING WAVES SWIMMING CLUB** www.geocities.com/makingwaves\_edm • Recreational and competitive swimming with coaching, beginners encouraged to participate. Socializing after practices • Every Tue, Thu

**PFLAG** Pride Centre, 9540-111 Ave • A support group for parents and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people • Meet the 1st Wed each month September-June (7-9pm); T. Ruby 780-436-1998 (after 6pm); E. edmontonab@pflag-canada.ca

**PRIDE CENTRE OF EDMONTON** 9540-111 Ave, www.pridecentreofedmonton.org (780-488-3234) • Open Tue-Fri 1-10pm, Sat 2-6:30pm • LGBT Seniors Drop-in: Meet every Tue/Thu (2-4pm) • CA: Meet every Thu (7pm) • Suit Up and Show Up: AA big book study group meet every Sat (noon) • Youth Understanding Youth: Youth up to 25 years, support and social group meet every Sat (7-9pm); yuy@shaw.ca • Womanspace: Board meeting 1st Sun each month (10:30am-12:30pm) • Trans Education/Support Group: Meet the 1st and 3rd Sun (2-4pm) of each month; www.albertatrans.org • Men Talking with Pride: Meet every Sun (7pm);

facilitator: Rob Wells robwells780@hotmail.com • HIV Support Group: Meet the 2nd Mon of each month (7pm) • Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning (TTIQ) Alliance: Support meeting the 2nd Tue each month (7:30pm) • Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning. Education, advocacy and support for men, women and youth; PFLAG Edmonton: Meet the 1st Wed each month (7pm) • Free short-term, solution-focused drop-in counseling; every Wed (7-10pm) • YouthSpace: drop-in for LGBTQ for youth up to 25; Tue-Sat (3-7pm)

**ROBERTSON-WESLEY UNITED CHURCH** 10209-123 St (780-482-1587) www.rwuc.org • Soul OUTing: an LGBT-focused alternative worship • 3rd Sun every month (7pm); worship Sun (10:30am); people of all sexual orientations welcome. A LGBT monthly book club and a bi-monthly film night. Call for more info or email jraven-scroft@rwuc.org

**ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH** 11526-76 Ave (780-436-1555) • People of all sexual orientations are welcome • Every Sun (10am worship)

**WOODY'S** 11723 Jasper Ave (780-488-6557) • Open Daily (noon) • Sat-Tue Karaoke with Tizzy and Patrick • Sat-Sun Pool Tournaments

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**BRAZIL WEEK 2008** Various venues on U of A campus (780-492-4926) • Commemorating Brazilian Independence Day, a week of readings, screenings, music, dance, and poetry • www.humanities.ualberta.ca/mics/

**CORN MAZE** 26101, SH 627, Spruce Grove, www.edmontoncomaze.ca, (780-288-0208) • Rexall Edmonton Indy themed maze • Until Oct. 18 • \$9 (12 and up)/\$7 (5-11)/free for kids under 5

**EDMONTON MULTICULTURAL STARS FESTIVAL** Giovanni Caboto Park • Featuring live music, dancing, free pancake breakfast, mini-soccer tournaments, sports activities, arts and crafts, and a talent showcase • Fri, Aug. 29 (4-9pm), Sat, Aug. 30 (9am-9pm)

**OPEN MINDS WALK AND RUN** Hawrelak Park, 9330 Groat Rd Contact: Kristina De Guzman at (780-428-2465) • 2.5k fun walk, 5k trail walk, 5k road run, or 10k trail run to raise money for the Schizophrenia Society, games for kids and music by Souliyah Fyah • Sun, Sept. 7 (8:30am check-in, 10am race/walk) • Register online at www.WalkandRun.ca

**QUE CALORI** Wellington Community Hall, 13440 132 St • Salsadiction Rueda Dance Team, Latin dance Party and fundraiser • Sat, Sept. 6 (8pm door, 9pm performance) • \$12 (adv at TIX on the Square)/\$15 (door)

**UNDER THE BIG TOP FESTIVAL** Festival Place, Sherwood Park (780-449-3378) • A new week-long performing arts festival featuring physical theatre, puppetry and magic • Until Aug. 31

## KARAOKE

**BLIND PIG** 32 St. Anne Street, St. Albert (780-418-6332) • Tue, Wed, Fri: Karaoke with Shelly

**BILLY BOB'S SPORTS BAR** Continental Inn, Stony Plain Rd (780-484-7751) • Wed (8pm-12am); Thu, Fri, Sat (9:30pm-1:30am); with Right Said Ed

**CASTLEDOWN'S PUB** 16753-100 St (780-457-7111) • Tue (9pm-1am); with Off-Key Entertainment

**CHRISTOPHER'S PARTY PUB** 37 Millbourne Rd (780-462-6565) • Tue (9pm); with Sonia/Prosound

**CROWN AND ANCHOR** 15277 Castledowns Rd (780-472-7696) • Thu (10:30pm) • Wed: Name that Tune

**DRUID** 11606 Jasper Ave • Wed nights: with Gary from Mr. Entertainment

**ECCO PUB** 9605-66 Ave (780-435-5050) • Sat (9pm-1am)

**GAS PUMP** 10166-114 St (780-488-4841) • Tue, Wed (9pm-1:30am); Gord's Best Live Singing Show

**HAWKEYES TOO** 10044-102 St (780-421-9898) • Fri, Sat (8pm-midnight); Hot Karaoke Productions

**HOOGANZ PUB** 10704-124 St (780-452-1168) • Fri: Karaoke with Krista, Liquid Entertainment

**INGLEWOOD PUB** 12402-118 Ave (780-451-1390) • Thu, hosted by Gordon; Fri, Sat: hosted by Jolly Greg Giant (9:30pm-2am)

**JASPER PLACE HOTEL** 15326 Stony Plain Rd (780-489-1906) • Mon (9pm-1am); Karaoke

**KNIGHTS PUB SOUTH** 1919-105 St (780-461-0587) • Fri, Sat (10pm-2am); Gord's Best Live Singing Show

**LAMONT HOTEL** 4815-51 St, Lamont (780-895-2413) • Last Fri every month (10pm-2am); with ProSound Productions

**LIONSHEAD PUB** Coast Terrace Inn, 4440 Gateway Blvd (780-431-5815) • Sun (8pm); With Evolution Entertainment

**MAZADAR** 10725-104 Ave (429-4940) • Fri (5pm-late); with Chris

**MOJO'S** Best Western Hotel, Fort Saskatchewan (780-998-7888) • Fri (9:30pm); with Sonia/Prosound Productions

**MONA LISA'S PUB** 9606-118 Ave (780-477-7752) • Thu, Fri, Sat: sound and songs with great hosts

**NEWCASTLE PUB** 6108-90 Ave (780-490-1999) • Thu

**NEW WEST HOTEL** 15025-111 Ave (780-489-2511) • Sun (3-7pm)

## The BS people believe

LGBT

## QUEERMONTON

TAMARA GORZALKA  
tam@vuwweekly.com

It's just my luck to get one of the worst viruses I've ever had right at the tail end of summer. I've lost my voice, spent the vast majority of last week in bed, had countless fever dreams (or more aptly fever nightmares), a cough that won't quit and a lot of other fun unmentionables. It's the same sort of luck that saw a place burn down last Wednesday, the day before I was to interview for a job there. Yes, the karma gods love me not.

So when it came to writing this week's column, I felt less than inspired. Always being one to get by with a little help from my friends, I asked them for suggestions of the many bullshit myths about queer people that pissed them off, with a smattering of my own. You'll see no mention of religion here, despite its constant connection to assorted claims about gay people. I'm neither qualified, nor do I have the energy to tackle that mountain.

"Hanging around gay people will make you gay." Come on. I could hang around with a doctor all day, it won't make me any more interested in or able to perform surgery tomorrow.

"Lesbians (especially the butch ones) just want to be men." No, transidentified males just want to be men. Or more accurately are men, who just happen to have been born in the wrong body. Clothes and overall look have very little to do with emotional gender. To use the medical analogy again, I might wear scrubs to bed because they're comfy, doesn't mean I dream of being a doctor.

"Lesbians hate men." I like guys. I have lots of male friends, and I always have. I'm just not attracted to them. I think girls are awesome, but I don't always love them either. One of my favourite quotes on the issue comes from film director Ligy Pullapally who said, "My personal belief is that homosexuality has little to do with either the actions or inactions of the opposite gender."

Some of my best friends are men. Are lesbians really so simple-minded that our emotional relationships are dependent simply on the possession of a vagina? I have met far too many vagina owners that I really wish to never encounter again to restrict myself only to them. And we mustn't forget that this entire idea hinges upon the concept that there are only two genders and that those two classes possess a bunch of unique attributes that aren't found in the other. An idea that I'm not particularly fond of myself.

"If you're gay, you'll never have kids." This is often a concern that parents have when their kid comes out, that they'll never get to be a grandparent. But in this age of adoption, fostering, artificial insemination and surrogacy, there's still plenty of ways to become have kids, if they so choose.

"Gay parents will raise a gay children." See all those homos running around? The majority of them were raised by heterosexuals. If straight people keep raising gay babies, Matt and Jim down the street are just as capable of raising hetero ones. And if the next

few generations are a little more open to sexual and gender fluidity, is that really a bad thing?

"Lesbians don't care about how they look." What, you think this short-spiky-feathered-hair-fitted-vintage-tee-choker-studded-belt-bootcut-jeans-with-folded-cuffs-faux-leather-wristband-and-camo-patterned-Converses look just put itself together? The thing Mr Joe Hetero doesn't get is that just because it's not attractive to him, doesn't mean a lot of work didn't go into it. It's not for his benefit anyway. And remember, the femme girl that you're busy checking out could just as easily be one of us.

"GAY PEOPLE just haven't met the right person (of the opposite sex)." I knew—I mean really knew—that I was definitely gay after I dated some of the best guys in the world. They treated me wonderfully, were kind, caring and overall great boyfriends. And I didn't feel anything. I liked them, sure, but I was utterly bored by them and I didn't know why. As Pullapally said, it just doesn't have anything to do with what the opposite gender lacks but what the same gender has to offer.

"Lesbians were made that way by a traumatic event, like sexual assault." Homosexuality isn't created by one event, gay people are born. Sure, some gay people are likely to have had abuse in their past, but so have a lot of straight people. Many gay people, myself included, never had a traumatizing event in their childhood.

"I've never met a gay person." Yes, you have. Unless you are an infant or have been living in a cave since your birth, I'm sure that you have. I can't count the number of times co-workers and such have excitedly asked me questions about being gay, saying they've "never met a gay person before." They have, they just didn't know it. The average person doesn't go around constantly trying to suss out the orientation of the people they interact with, and even if they do, chances are they won't see it if they're looking for their stereotyped idea of what gay and lesbian people are. Remember, you can't tell a person's gender or sexual orientation just by looking at them.

"Bisexuals can't make up their minds, are fence-sitters, greedy, confused or attention-seeking." Many people, gays included, seem to think that bisexuality isn't a real orientation. There's an idea too, that once a bisexual chooses to settle down in a monogamous relationship, they cease to be bi. This isn't anymore true than the idea that if I settle down I stop being a lesbian because I'm only with one woman instead of dating many.

"In gay and lesbian relationships one person is the 'man' and one is 'the woman.'" Maybe back in the '50s there was a reason for gender roles like these. Mom took care of the home and dad went to work. But now, think about it, what do those distinctions even mean? They don't tend to apply much to straight relationships anymore and they don't have a place in gay ones. A healthy relationship is one that shares responsibilities equally.

I'm sure I missed a few. Shoot me an email to tell me your favourites that I forgot. ♥



# CLASSIFIEDS

IF YOU WANT TO PLACE YOUR CLASSIFIED AD IN VUE WEEKLY PLEASE PHONE 426-1996. DEADLINE IS NOON THE TUESDAY BEFORE PUBLICATION

## DATING

Minimum Date-Speed Date Fri Sept 12 at The Rock Bar & Grill (St. Albert) Ages: 21-33, 35-45 & 47-56. Register at 780-457-6535 or [www.eightminute-date.ca](http://www.eightminute-date.ca)

## EDUCATIONAL

Actors Needed... Must include professional attitude and desire to succeed. [www.vadastudios.com](http://www.vadastudios.com)

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As part of our expansion programme, Yash Clothing And Textile company is seeking for part time work from home Sales/Account representatives, it pays more than \$3650 a month plus benefits, depends on your devotion to the job and takes only little of your time. Please contact us for more details.

Requirements-Should be a computer literate. 2-3 hours access to the internet weekly. Must be over 20yrs of age. Must be efficient and dedicated. If you are interested and need more information, please send e-mail to [yash.sandpiper02@graffiti.net](mailto:yash.sandpiper02@graffiti.net) for more feedback

Ricky's All Day Grill, South Ed Common Seeks Experienced cooks, starting at \$12.80/hr 10004 21 Ave. Apply in person

The Cutting Room is looking for Assistants and Stylists Please drop off your resume to 10635 124 Street

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## HOUSES FOR SALE OR LEASE

Low Cost Counselling Available The Education Clinic at the University of Alberta is now accepting referrals for personal, couples and family counselling for the 2008-2009 university year. There is a one-time \$50 administration fee. Counselling is provided at NO CHARGE. For more information call 780-492-3746.

**Mediterranean House for Lease in Glenora area** 2 bdm with loft, cathedral ceilings Garage, full basement, all appliances Must be seen, \$1600, 780-910-1168

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## ARTIST TO ARTIST

**FREE•FREE•FREE•FREE•FREE** **FREE•FREE•FREE•FREE•FREE** **ARTIST/NON PROFIT CLASSIFIEDS**

Need a volunteer? Forming an acting troupe? Want someone to jam with? Place up to 20 words FREE. Ads more than 20 words are subject to regular price or cruel editing. Free ads will run for four weeks, if you want to renew or cancel please phone Glenys at 780-426-1996/fax 426-2889/e-m [glenys@vueweekly.com](mailto:glenys@vueweekly.com) or drop it off. Deadline is noon the Tue before publication. Placement will depend upon available space

**Call To Enter 2009/2010 For The Works Art & Design Festival:** currently accepting applications to take part in the 2009 and 2010 Core Program of themed exhibits-theme of sustainability and environmental consciousness with a core program relating to WATER in 2008, HEAT in 2009 and EARTH in 2010. The Works Art & Design Festival's 25th anniversary year. Submit exhibits for consideration: Environmental Site Specific Installation; Curated Group Exhibit; Individual or Two Artist Exhibit, and Community Programs. Proposals should relate to the theme of the year applicants are interested in. 2009 and 2010 submissions are due **Aug. 23, 2008**. See [www.the-works.ab.ca](http://www.the-works.ab.ca) for application

Nature photographer looking for artist using either pencil, coal or chalk to draw representations of my photographs for collaborated show. All inquiries welcome. Please contact chris at 780 757 6954, [chris-gaivgan@hotmail.com](mailto:chris-gaivgan@hotmail.com)

Steeps-Old Glenora: for open mic-Spoken word First Thursday every month. Contact Adam Snider to sign up [adam.snider@gmail.com](mailto:adam.snider@gmail.com)

Photographer seeks interesting, strong, photogenic faces. Sitter will be repaid with free photographs. Gerry contact@[gerryyaum.com](mailto:gerryyaum.com), [www.gerryyaum.com](http://www.gerryyaum.com)

## MUSICIANS

Hard rock-punk band requires high energy drummer to complet power trio. Must have good gear. No amateurs. Call Paul 780-233-4269

Bass player with vocals wanted for three-piece band. Western roots-based music. [www.marvmachura.com](http://www.marvmachura.com) Marv @ 240-1509

Experienced country lead guitarist would like to jam with mature country singer who likes traditional country music. 780-421-1250

Indie Rock/Alternative band seeks vocalist ages 16-19. Wide variety of influences and musical tastes. We have a full PA and are in contact with many major industry professionals. Contact Matt. 780-604-4199

King Ring Nancy seeking pro hard-hitting drummer, very serious and dedicated. Call Kevin 780-642-2608

Paul and Matt from the Las Vegas Krypt Keepers are looking for guitar player and drummer for all original act, selected covers, and covering some Krypt Keeper stuff. 966-6305 & 465-9997

Hart Bachmier's Dead Mans Train requires drummer and bass player. **HARD ROCK. LONG HAIR.** Call toll free 1-888-845-0811

Flutist Available; Misty Rose Knol has a B.Mus is well trained and experienced in playing classical, by ear, solo or in groups [mistyknol@hotmail.com](mailto:mistyknol@hotmail.com) 780.932.1224

## VOLUNTEER

**Edmonton Multicultural Stars Festival, Aug. 29-30.** The youth planning committee meets every Fri at 5:30pm at 208, 10010-107A Ave for info or to volunteer, call Jennifer, Action for Healthy Communities, 780-944-4687

Plant a garden row for Meals on Wheels Looking for help with fresh produce during the summer. Drop off produce 11111-103 Ave, 8am-3pm weekdays; [www.mealsonwheelsedmonton.org](http://www.mealsonwheelsedmonton.org)

Volunteer website for youth 14-24 years old. [www.youthvolunteer.ca](http://www.youthvolunteer.ca)

**Red Cross's Humanitarian Issues Program:** need volunteers to help promote humanitarian issues to the Edmonton Community. We are hoping to expand our youth team (12-24 yrs old). Contact Laura Keegan at [laura.keegan@redcross.ca](mailto:laura.keegan@redcross.ca)

Participants and volunteers needed for the **28th Annual Terry Fox Run 2008, Sun, Sept. 14, 8:30** (registration), 10am (run) at Hawrelak Park. Run/walk/roll 2, 5, or 10 km, [www.terryfoxrun.org](http://www.terryfoxrun.org), 888.836.9786 for info

**The Edmonton Guerrilla Gardeners Want You!** Looking for help in the mass planting of sapling trees

**Had Enough? Cocaine Anonymous 425-2715**

along Baseline Road between Edmonton and Sherwood Park. Info at: <http://edmontongg.blogspot.com>; [www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=10775038726](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=10775038726)

Hope Mission call for the summer, need water bottles to hand out throughout downtown's inner city. Drop-off at 9908-106 Ave, call 422-2018

**Trout Unlimited's Yellow Fish Road Program** Looking for volunteers interested in the environment and aquatic ecosystems. Volunteers paint yellow fish on storm drains in Edmonton neighborhoods. E: [krol-heiser@tucanada.org](mailto:krol-heiser@tucanada.org)

**Old Strathcona Youth Society:** Looking for volunteers (21+) interested in working with high-risk youth, drop-in setting. Naomi 496-5947, e-m: [osyc@telus.net](mailto:osyc@telus.net)

Special needs "Learn to Bike" courses at Gold Bar Park are looking for volunteer experienced cyclists to help with this course. Thu evenings **Sept. 4-Oct. 16**. John at [jbcollier@shaw.ca](mailto:jbcollier@shaw.ca)

**Autism Speaks Canada:** Inaugural Edmonton Capital Region Walk for Autism Info. and registration: 888.362.6227 or: [www.walknowforautism.org/edmonton](http://www.walknowforautism.org/edmonton) **Sun, Sept. 7, 2008** / Registration: 8:30-10am at St. Albert Place, Lion's Park

Bring laughter, smiles and simple delights to child and back into your life! **Be a Big Brother or Big Sister Today!** Call 424-8181. Remember you don't have to change your life to change theirs!

Big Brothers Big Sisters and the African Centre need volunteers to help at a camp for children and youth new to Canada. Focus is to provide children and youth 5-16 with a summer they will never forget. Runs Mon, Wed and Fri, 9-4. To volunteer contact Diana at 780-424-8181 ext 227

Brain Neurobiology Research Program at U of A Hospital is seeking healthy and depressed subjects (not currently taking antidepressants) for various studies. Reimbursement for expenses provided. Call 780-407-3221 (depressed only), 407-3906 (healthy or depressed), or 780-407-3775 (female healthy or depressed, including pregnant and just delivered) for more information

Volunteer for your local Red Cross. Help us make our mission of assisting the most vulnerable in our community and around the world possible. Volunteer for

**Want to stop smoking?** Nicotine Anonymous meetings: 7pm, every Wed, Ebenezer United Church Hall, 106 Ave, 163 St. Contact Gwynn 443-3020.

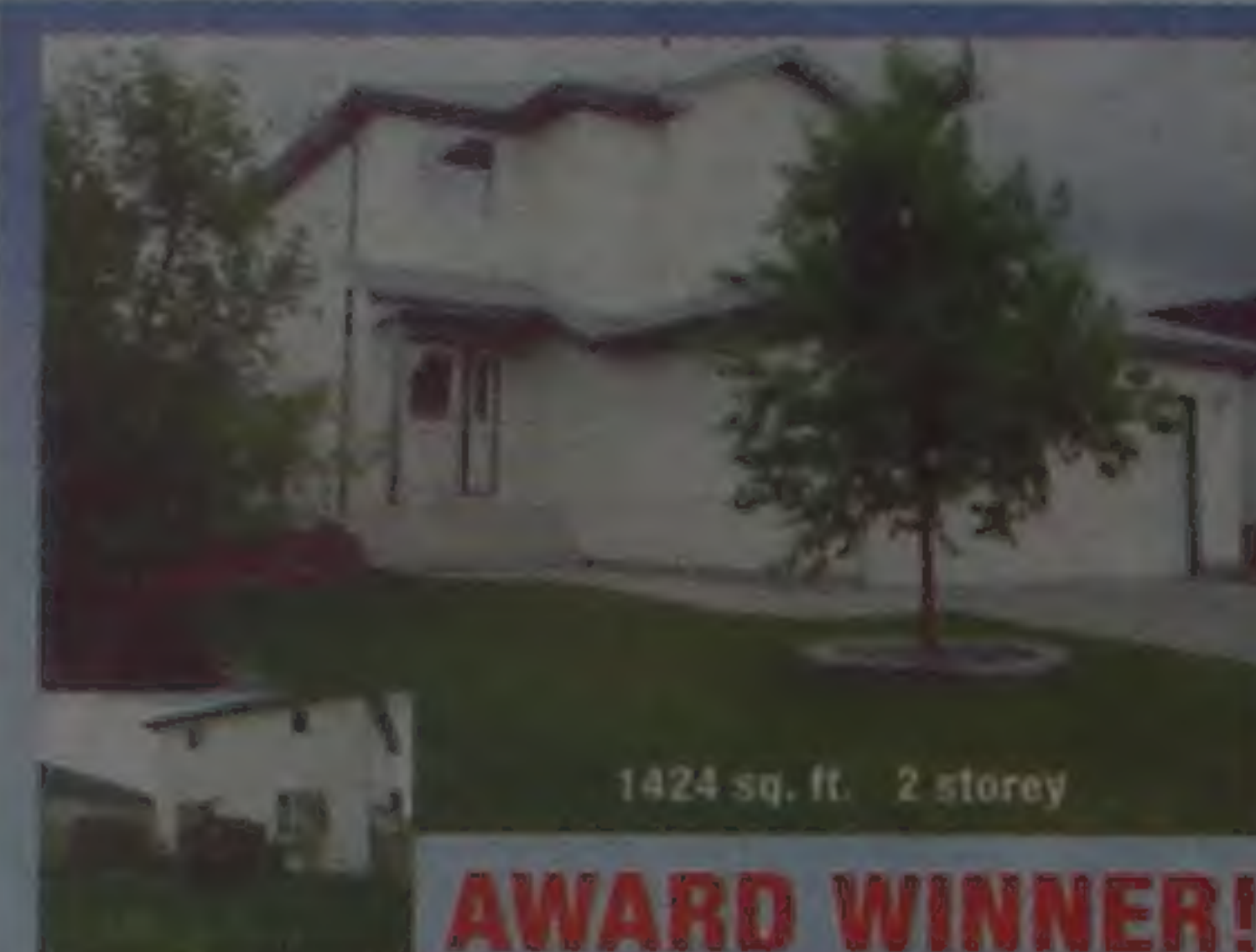
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Public Outreach is hiring its summer staff! We are offering great positions for students looking to gain valuable work experience in a fun and flexible environment.

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# Strangely appropriate for the bullshit issue

## ADVICE ALT.SEX.COLUMN

ANDREA NEMERSON  
altsex@altsexcolumn.com

DEAR ANDREA:

I am a 26-year-old male, good looking, living in New Jersey. I am very much fond of scat play with females. I always used to play with my own scat, but I always wish some female would share scat play with me. Can you help me with that please?

LOVE, SCATMAN WANNABE

DEAR MAN:

Yeah, probably not.

I was changing the baby this morning when she started to whimper and fuss.

"What's the matter," I asked her. "Don't like poop?"

"No," she said firmly. "Don't yike it."

Let's be honest, I don't yike it either. The truth is, hardly anybody does yike it, and of those, most appear to be men. So every six months I get some variant of your question and every year or so I answer it. Like this: "Chances are you're SOL. Sorry!"

There are a few women who will actively seek out scat play. They are, in both the Rick James sense and the strictly demographic one, superfreaks. If you moved to a major metro area and became involved with the S/M community and behaved well and got invited to parties you might hear of one, or perhaps if you approach very carefully and are vewwy vewwy quiet, glimpse one in the wild. I can't even promise you you'd meet her, and I certainly cannot guarantee that anyone you did meet would want to do her thing with you. This is not the sort of thing people just indiscriminately do with anyone who comes along.

As with many other very rare, widely despised subspecialties, this is the sort of thing you're probably going to have to pay for. You could find yourself a strict German goddess or some such who might consent to shit on you on her terms. That just might have to be good enough for you, and it is certainly going to cost you.

LOVE, ANDREA

DEAR ANDREA:

My boyfriend says his old girlfriend used to let him pee on her. I'm wondering why, and also if it's really safe. He says it's sterile. Is it really? And what's the deal with this? I can look it up but I kind of don't want to see what happens if I look up "pee on me" on Google.

LOVE, NOT SURE ABOUT THIS

DEAR SURE:

Good thinking! Especially if it's your work computer, but either way, googling "piss

play" or similar is probably a bad idea unless you're quite sure you want to see what you'd see.

I can't answer "why" without knowing more about what the boyfriend and the ex were up to. You can piss on somebody with much sneering and attitude and be all dominant about it, but two people can also just kind of play with pee because it's there, with no greater meaning. You can splash it around, or aim it, or drink it/make somebody else drink it, but there's no way to tell which they were doing without more info. On the subject of drinking it, though, it really is pretty clean, although I hesitate to use the word "sterile" since I'm a stickler and anything that's touched the outside of somebody's body is going to pick up some "body ash" or some dust or something, plus there are many reasons that a spare blood cell or so might be floating around in there; but basically, pee is remarkably clean.

Poo, of course, is remarkably dirty—it defines "dirty," really—and right there you have your difference. It's extremely unlikely that you're going to catch anything from pee. Social taboos aside it's pretty innocuous. The taboos are there, though, so in a way pee is a cheap thrill: it feels really dirty without being any dirtier, really, than a glass of drinking water, and in many cases it's cleaner. The big thrill/low actual disgustingness quotient explains its relative popularity among "weird sex" types. It's weird but not that weird.

None of this means, of course, that you have to let him pee on you. You're going to want to ask what exactly he and the ex were up to, what he got out of it, and, if possible, what she got out of it. As long as he's willing to drop it if you're not into it, though, what the heck. Maybe you'll yike it, maybe you won't.

LOVE, ANDREA

Red Cross. To volunteer call 780.423.2680 / E: wz-edm-dm@redcross.ca

**Rise Up: Radio Free Edmonton on CJSR FM 88** seeking people with a critical ear who will be at protests, picket-lines, blockades, any sites of struggle between people, corporations or governments to simply bring a recorder and send us the footage. E: riseupradio@cjsr.com; Sam Power, 492-2577 ext. 4 for recording equipment and more details

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Break the Code! Help and adult to read and write. Call Jordan Centre for Family Literacy 421-7323 www.familit.ca

## VUEWEEKLY CONTEST RULES:

Unless otherwise specified, the following will apply:

- the winner must be 18 or older.
- prize must be accepted as awarded.

- no one may enter any contest more than once.

- you may only win once every 60 days.

- Vue Weekly reserves the right to exclude anyone from our contests.

- no staff, sponsors or members of their immediate families may enter.

- the personal information of those who enter will not be sold but may be provided to contest sponsors.

- the chances of winning depend on the number of entries received.

- by entering, entrants consent to the use of their names by Vue Weekly for publicity.

- Vue Weekly is not responsible for prizes unclaimed after 15 days.

- by entering with an email address one authorizes oneself to be added to FIRSTREAD!

Senior's Birthday Entertainment Senior recreation/activity centre needs volunteer entertainers for monthly afternoon parties. Weekday message Karen 780-468-1985 seesa.ca

Volunteers Needed to work with new immigrants in a variety of tasks and with some great fun events and outings! Many exciting shifts available! Call Judy 424-3545, ext 249

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Volunteers Needed to help new immigrants to Canada learn about Canadian customs and culture. Tue and Thu June-Aug. Ph Judy 424-3545, ext 249

**The Support Network:** Volunteer today to be a Distress Line Listener. Apply on line at: www.thesupportnetwork.com or call 732-6648

Meals on Wheels, volunteer kitchen help and drivers needed, weekdays 10am-1pm. Call 429-2020.

Volunteer for ElderCare. Help with daily activities for seniors. Call 434-4747 Ext. 4

Canadian Mental Health Association—Edmonton Region Board Recruitment. For info visit www.cmha-edmonton.ab.ca, click on Volunteer. Contact Abigail Parrish-Craig at grammaabby@shaw.ca

Join in the hottest new trend of personal history. Unique volunteer opportunity to develop your artistic and writing skills by helping to put together a collection of life history stories of Edmonton elders. Interviews have been conducted, we now need someone to assist with transcription, storywriting, and/or layout and design. 434-4747 ext 4 for info

Volunteer for the AGA and meet other art enthusiasts, get a free membership after 30 hrs of volunteer work, get invitations to events and movies. For info contact Priscilla Wagar at 422-6223 or pwagar@artgalleryalbarta.com

Would you like to help people/families affected by Alzheimers? Socialize with seniors while assisting with games and activities. ElderCare Edmonton, 780-434-4747 ext 4

Help to broadcast news nationally for the blind and print restricted! Email edmonton@voiceprintcanada.com, or call 451-8331

Love Bingo? Volunteer for Elder Care. Bingo volunteers are needed to help raise funds for program meals and outings. Ph 434-4747, ext. 4

Exposure: Edmonton's Queer Arts and Culture Festival seeks steering committee volunteers. Visit www.exposurefestival.ca

Volunteer for a more just society for immigrants and refugees. www.multiculturalcoalition.ca or call Janina 423-1973

P.A.L.S. Project Adult Literacy Society are looking for volunteer tutors to work with adult students in the

Math Literacy Program. For info Ph 424-5514

**E.C.A.W.A.R. (EDMONTON COALITION AGAINST WAR AND RACISM)** Volunteers welcome. www.wage-peace.com for info/contacts, Ph 988-2713

**A call for volunteers - Action for Healthy Communities:** Questions about AHC philosophy & programs? 944-4687 Visit: www.a4hc.ca

Have you been affected by another person's sexual behaviour? S-Anon is a 12-Step fellowship for family members and friends of sex addicts. Ph 780-988-4411 for meeting locations and info, or visit www.sanon.org

**IS DRINKING A PROBLEM? A.A. CAN HELP! 424-5900**

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### SERVICES

**SACE—Public Education Program:** Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (www.sace.ab.ca) provides crisis intervention, information, counseling, public education services. For a customized presentation T: 423-4102/F: 421-8734/E: info@sace.ab.ca; www.sace.ab.ca/24 Hour Crisis Line: 423-4121

**Canadian Mental Health Association,** www.cmha-edmonton.ab.ca Education Program is pleased to offer workshops to give you the skills to intervene with people who may be at risk for suicide. **Follow the links to ASIST** or call 414-6308

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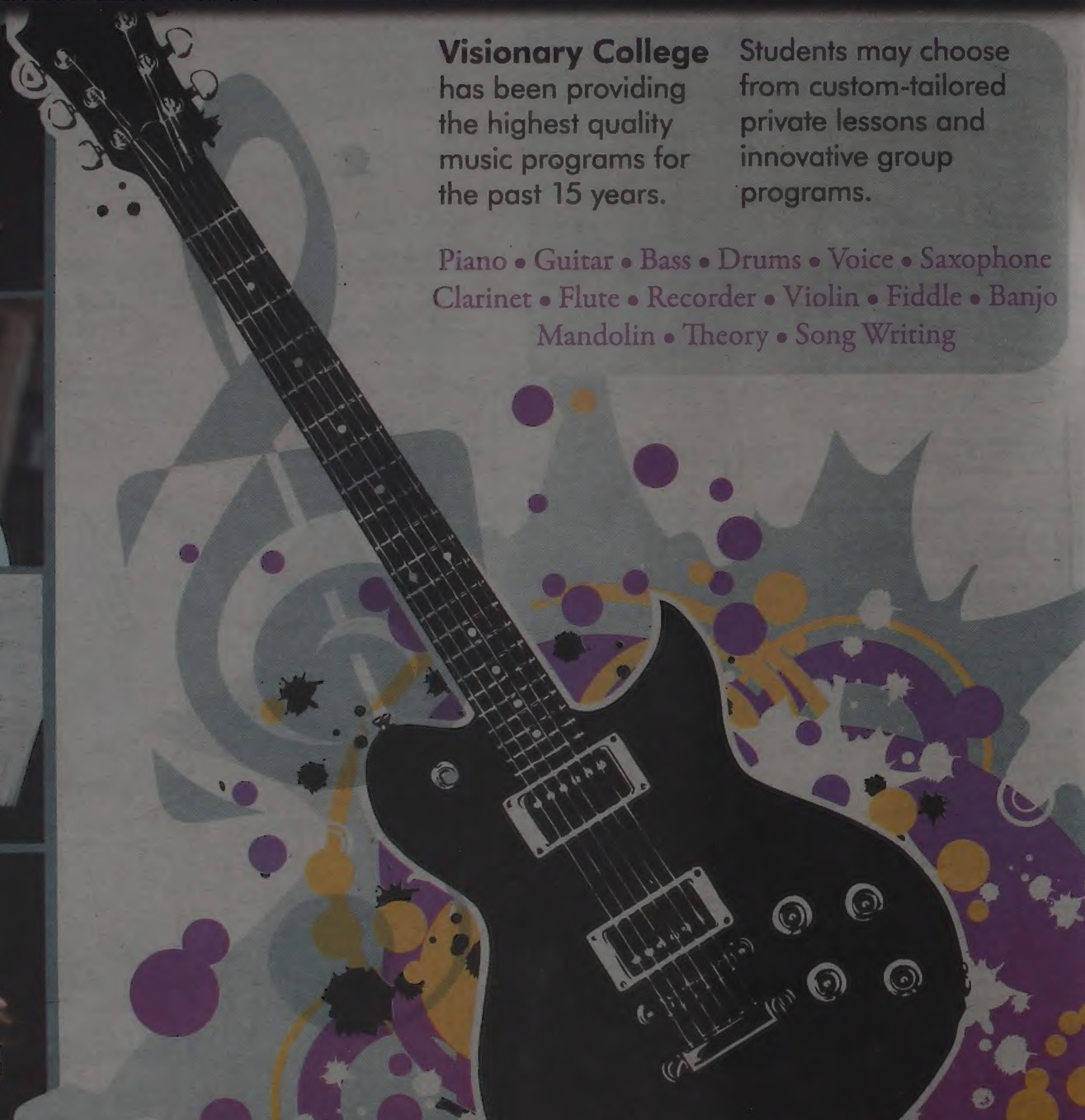
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